SAT. SPECIAL / G2

PDI visits set of Charice first Hollywood movie

SPORTS / A23

Hurting Pacquiao says ABS-CBN promised 'political support'

NEWS / A6

GMA cancels Independence Day parade on June 12

NEWS / A2

Poll automation bidding off to rocky start

Hostage taker invites victims to another outing

By Erika Sauler

THIS TIME, THERE will be no hostage-taking.

Armando "Kat" Duncil Jr., who held captive 26 children and three teachers from his day-care center two years ago today, made this assurance as he invited his former victims to a swimming outing.

They were supposed to go to a resort in Dasmariñas, Cavite today to mark the

HOSTAGE A11

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Saturday, March 28, 2009 ++ 12 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 110 P18 online: www.inquirer.net

Gov't ready to pull back forces to save Jolo hostages

By Tarra Quismundo and Kristine L. Alave

THE GOVERNMENT IS READY TO PULL police and civilian forces farthest back to save the lives of three old workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) held captive in Jolo, Sulu and threatened with beheading by Abu Sayyaf bandits.

Speaking with reporters yesterday in Camp Crame, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno said the government would consider moving the line of police and civilian emergency forces (CEF) farther to the fringes of Jolo to facilitate negotiations for the release of the three hostages.

"It may be that the kidnappers are worried about the CEF line. What we're thinking of doing, provided they show a little bit more reason, [is to] move these lines a little bit further away from the

GOV'T A4

3 cops freed after 83 days in NPA captivity

By Karen Lapitan
Inquirer Southern Luzon
and Michael Lim Ubac

THE COMMUNIST NEW PEOPLE'S Army yesterday released three policemen that the rebels had been holding as "prisoners of war" since capturing them in an ambush in Bulacan, Rizal, almost three months ago.

Insp. Ben Casingay, PO1 Marvin Agnaso and PO1 Alberto Umali were released at a little past noon yesterday amid heavy rain in Barangay Masabud, a hilly part of Rodriguez town.

A civilian group that included Rizal Gov. Casimiro Ynares III, Rodriguez Mayor Pedro Canlas, Antipolo Bishop Gabriel Reyes, Sen. Jinggoy Madrigal, and representa-

3 COPS A4

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK At the press conference presenting the "prisoners of war" in the Antipolo capitol, the soldiers say that what they had to go through was just part of their duty. From left are Antipolo Bishop Gabriel Reyes, Sen. Jinggoy Madrigal, Insp. Ben Casingay, PO1 Marvin Agnaso and PO1 Alberto Umali. MICHAEL UBAC

Ping accused of murder

He ordered hit, say 4 Dacer daughters

LACSON: I have nothing to fear if truth and evidence are the basis of the case. INQUIRER PHOTO

By Norman Bordadora and Christine O. Avendaño

EIGHT YEARS AFTER the brutal murder, four US-based daughters of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer have formally accused opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson of ordering the killing of their father.

In a complaint-affidavit filed yesterday in the Department of Justice (DOJ) by their lawyers, the four women also accused the former chief of the Philippine National Police (PNP) of directing his men to cover up the crime.

Lacson insisted he had no hand in the killing of Dacer and his driver, Emmanuel Corbito, and said in a phone interview: "Wang mayroong kinalaman ang mga tao ko. Hindi naman sila ang pinakamataas na opisyal (If any men were involved, I wasn't the most senior official)."

Asked if he was referring to then President Joseph Estrada as being the official higher than him, Lacson said: "I am not accusing anybody."

Estrada declined to comment when asked for his reaction on the action taken by the Dacer daughters. He has also repeatedly denied being involved in

DOJ A7

Extradition of ex-Lacson aide from US faces delay

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY—A former Philippine National Police (PNP) officer who has spent the last 3 1/2 years in prison after pleading guilty to aiding-and-abetting-related charges will have to wait a little bit longer before he is returned to his native country to face murder charges.

US Magistrate Judge Esther Salas delayed an extradition hearing for Michael Ray Aquino on Thursday to give attorneys time to file briefs and line up witnesses.

Attorney Mark A. Berman,

EXTRADITION A7

SIDE BY SIDE President Arroyo hails House Speaker Nograles' "firm leadership" during the 18th national assembly of the of the Provincial Board Members League in Davao City. The league read a resolution declaring full support for Ms Arroyo's "strong republic." MALACAÑANG PHOTO

For earth's sake: Turn off lights 8:30-9:30 p.m.

By Alexis Pupa, Abigail L. Ho and Tarra Quismundo

MAKE A STAND FOR MOTHER EARTH. Switch off lights from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. today for Earth Hour.

The call was made yesterday by Earth Hour national director Ivy Sanz: "We urge Filipinos, wherever you are in the globe, to shut off electricity in work places and in your homes for just one hour—from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on March 28 in whatever time zone you are. Let's show the world the Filipino bayanihan (solidarity) spirit and send a powerful message of hope and concrete action on global warming."

Sanz, who is also head of the Climate Change and Energy Program of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in the Philippines, said some 400 cities and municipalities in the country have pledged their participation in the event. This constitutes

FOR EARTH'S A17

House ruling party on Cha-cha offensive by April 13

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and TJ Burgonio

THE RULING COALITION IN the House of Representatives will hold a party caucus to map out the details of the majority's Charter change offensive when Congress resumes sessions on April 13.

House Speaker Prospero Nograles, who authored one of the Cha-cha resolutions, said the purpose of the caucus is for the majority to reach a consensus on Charter change, and decide the timing of the debate and voting on the issue on the floor.

The House is set to tackle Nograles' House Bill No. 727 which seeks to lift the constitutional restrictions on foreign equity ownership in the country.

Nograles has also endorsed a draft resolution of Committee Rep. Luis Villafuerte, calling for Congress to constitute itself into a constituent assembly to carry out Charter amendments.

The Villafuerte measure is being opposed by some senators who cha-cha hopes to mask promise that Congress can vote as a single body and not as two chambers to amend the Charter. This would mean that the House could effect Charter change without the Senate as it would need only 197 of its members to

HOUSE A6

HISTORIC BID The Comelec starts the bidding process for the P11.5-billion election automation contract for which 18 local and foreign firms have bought bid documents for P1M a set. Except for two, all are foreign companies, among them Total Information Management and Smartmatic represented by its president Robert Cook (left) and Cesar Flores. (Story on Page A2.) LYN RILLON

Ex-cop exec gets life for Baron slay

By Marlon Ramos

"SIX CIRCUMSTANCES" SEALED the fate of former Supt. Rafael Cardeño.

A Las Piñas judge has sentenced the former police official to life imprisonment for masterminding the December 2001 murder of Young Officers' Union (YOU) spokesperson Baron Geronimo.

Judge Bernelito Soriz Mercado of Branch 275 of the Las Piñas Regional Trial Court meted out the maximum penalty on

EX-COP A17

PDI Read-Along bags another award

FOR INSTILLING THE HABIT OF reading among children, the Philippine Daily Inquirer has been recognized as a "culture-friendly" media organization by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and the Philippine International Theater Institute (ITI).

The Inquirer, which was cited for its Read-Along sessions, was among the recipients of the first ever ITI-NCCA Award for Culture-Friendly Media Institutions in a ceremony held yesterday at the Premiere Guest House in Malacañang.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita gave out the awards in behalf of President Macapagal-Arroyo, along with NCCA Chair Vilma Labrador and United Nations representative

FOR READ-ALONG A17

READ THE LIPS Minor Generalao, PDI Research department head (right), Kate Pedroso, Research section head and reporter Ruth Navarra are thrilled to pose with Dopiy, their fellow awardee.

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

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Poll automation bidding begins

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- ISO 22000 Food Safety Management System Documentation — June 25-26

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NEGOSYO PARA SA BAWAT PILIPINO!

Requirements eased, raising fears of 'fly-by-night' bidders

By Kristine L. Alave

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS (COMELEC) has relaxed one of the requirements for bidders of the 2010 elections automation contract, a move that may not sit well with some pre-bid conference participants.

Comelec chief counsel Ferdinand Rafman, who chairs the Special Bids and Awards Committee (SBAC), said the amendment was in accordance with bidding procedures issued by the Government Procurement Policy Board (GPPB) to prevent a monopoly and violation of bidding.

The Request for Proposal issued by the Comelec last week required prospective contractors to have completed a project similar to and worth at least 50 percent of the Comelec's total automation budget of P11.2 billion in the last three years.

Pointing that few companies would be able to pass the requirement, the Comelec on June, upon SBAC's recommendation, amended the provision on March 26.

Instead of a single contract similar to and costing about half of the 2010 automation project, bidders now can show that they implemented at least three similar contracts in the past three years with a combined value of half of the Comelec's P11.2-billion automation project.

New provision

According to the new provision, the prospective bidder must show "a statement that the business/company of the prospective bidder has been in existence for at least three consecutive years prior to the advertisement of the IAIB [Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid] and that it has completed at least three similar contracts and the aggregate contract amounts is equivalent to at least 50 percent of the approved budget for the contract, provided that the largest of these similar contracts must be equivalent to at least 25 percent of the approved for the contract of the project to be bid."

During the pre-bid conference yesterday, representatives of Spain-based Indra Sistemas S.A. asked for a clarification of the new requirement.

Indra counsel Atty. Sandhan said Comelec should first ask the GPPB's opinion on the matter to ensure that the change was legal. "What is the reason for relaxing the rule? If the threshold cannot be handled, will we keep on relaxing the rules?" he asked. "We are not opposing it. We are helping the Comelec to be as transparent as possible."

He noted that the amendment could allow the entry of "fly-by-night" companies that do not have the capability to conduct automated elections on a massive scale.

Edmundo Cantin, a Philippine Computer Society official, said the amendment was a "gray area" that needed to be clarified. The Comelec should have explicitly stated the mode/s to be used to achieve the new provision, he added.

Rafman said the amendment was based on a 2006 GPPB resolution introduced to avoid unfair competition, monopoly and failed bidding.

18 companies

Ramon Casiple, a member of the advisory council, defended the amendments, saying that there was nothing wrong with it. "We need to get it right the first time," he said.

All 18 companies who bought Terms of Reference last week attended the pre-bid conference. These were: Total Information Management and Smartmatic, Avante International Inc., Ilaya Corp. and Scanstrata, DMS Philippines and Samsung, Indra Sistemas SA, Universal Biomfuse Services Co. and Seguela, 4E Data Hub International Inc., Global Satellite Network Ltd., AMA Group Holdings Corp. and Elitel International, Mega Data Corp. Of the 18, only Mega Data Corp. and AMA Group Holding Corp. are home-grown companies.

Comelec officials said they were heartened by the number of companies that have expressed an interest in computerization for the 2010 presidential and national elections. "It's a good sign. It means that there is confidence in the process," said Technical Working Group member Ramon Aquino.

If the poll body fails to award the contract for the automation project before the May 23 deadline, it would be forced to use the manual voting and counting in the May 2010 elections.

Higher traffic fines stay

THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT reiterated yesterday it was time to upgrade fines for traffic violations in land disciplines, help curb reckless driving and prevent accidents on the road.

In a statement, Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza said Department Circular (DC) No. 2008-10 or the "Revised Schedule of LTO Fines and Penalties for Traffic and Administrative Violations" was the result of "consultation and consensus building with the various stakeholders."

"These fines are not exorbitant, for example, the fine for reckless driving when committed and when it has caused an accident, is very little compared to the costs brought about by injury or thus drawn loss of lives and damage to property," he said.

He noted that the old fines and penalties date back to 1993, and were now "obsolete."

"With the increase in the number of accidents occurring daily, it is high time we properly implement the rules and impose stricter fines and penalties to prevent laxity and to build a culture of safety among our road users," he said. — Rio T. Ilishmahe

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37 Pinoy seamen on 2 seized tankers

BASSEIL—TWO EUROPEAN-owned tankers, with 37 Filipino crew members, have been hijacked off the coast of Somalia, prompting an alert for other vessels to watch for a pick-up in pirate activity the EU's anti-piracy naval mission said on Thursday.

The Maritime Security Center run by the EU naval force said the 9,600-ton Greek-owned, Panamanian-flagged M/V Napa by was seized on Wednesday with no case of 19.

A Greek merchant marine ministry spokesperson said the chemical tanker's Romanian captain and 18 Filipino crew members were in good health and that the boat's owner, Lotus Shipping, had begun negotiations with the pirates.

The incident was followed early on Thursday with the capture of the 23,000-ton Norwegian-owned and Bahamian-registered tanker M/V Biscaglia.

Sidhan Shipping AS, which owns the tanker, said in a statement from Norway that the crew numbered 27 men, hers of different nationalities, including a Norwegian captain. Of the other 26 crew members, 19 are from the Philippines, five from Poland, one from Russia and one from Lithuania.

104 Pinoy hostages

In Manila, The Department of Foreign Affairs confirmed yesterday that at least 104 Filipino crew manning the crews of the two tankers hijacked off the coast of Somalia on March 25 and 26.

This brings to 104 the number of Filipino seafarers in the hands of suspected Somali pirates.

Citing a report from the Philippine Embassy in Nairobi, DFA spokesperson Ed Malaya said 37 Filipinos were on board Filipinas that two others were by pirates last March 25.

The following day, the Bow Asir was also hijacked, he said. Fifteen of the crew were believed to be Filipinos.

Malaya said the identities of the 18 other crew members were still not known. He said the DFA was coordinating with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration to find out the identities of the Filipinos crew members of both vessels and to notify their families.

"The Philippine government is also coordinating with the principals of the vessels and the concerned authorities to expeditiously secure the release and repatriation of Filipino seafarers," he said.

Sidhan Shipping said there had been no contact with the ship.

Company manager Per Reidarn said on Friday that conflict images show the Bow Asir was heading south and that there were no reports of injuries.

He had communication with the ship's crew an e-mail on Thursday saying the 18 pirates carrying machine guns had gained control of the tankers.

"We have no reports of any injuries," said Hansen.

"We are doing our utmost to ensure the safety of the crew, and have established communication lines with naval forces, insurance companies, flag state and classification," he said.

The Gulf of Aden, which links Europe and Asia, has been the site of many hijackings, prompting the international community to act against the pirates.

Naval presence

Reports hearing Somali pirates attacked more than 130 merchant ships in the region last year, an increase of more than 200 percent on 2007, according to the International Maritime Bureau.

The number and success rate of pirate attacks has declined slightly since the start of the year, because of unfavorable sea conditions and an increased foreign naval presence in the Gulf of Aden.

Greece, which is home to the biggest commercial fleet in the world, called on the European Union "to play a more active role" in scrambling down on piracy after the latest two boats were captured.

AFP/AP and Reuters, Cyprus Mail

Senate body to buck telcos' tax exemption

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC services will oppose proposals pending in the House of Representatives that seek to exempt telecommunications service providers from paying the 10-percent franchise taxes to their local communities.

Committee chair Sen. Manuel Roxas II declared yesterday that he would not entertain, much less call a hearing, on the proposed measure once they reached the Senate for consideration.

"Local governments and how the telcos' tax. Okay, if it is wrong that they are not made to benefit from the telcos' profits. Those are the reasons why I cannot support this," he said in a statement.

Revilla said he was "dismayed" that while the House was proposing an additional tax on text messaging that would most likely be passed on to the public, "there are serious recommendations that seek to free telcos from paying taxes."

The Senate is also hosting a proposal to impose a 10-centavo fee on text messages amounted to another as much as two billion text every day. If enacted, the proposed measure will raise P200 million daily revenues for the government.

Senator del Rio Rep. Rodolfo Dana had said that various local government leaders had vowed to campaign against members of the House and the Senate who would vote for the proposed five bills to exempt the telecoms firms.

The Daily Gospel

Saturday, March 28, 2009
6th Week of Lent
Lectionary: 247

Gospel: Jn 7:40-53

Many who had been listening to Jesus words began to say, "This is the Prophet."

Others said, "This is the Christ." But some wondered, "Would the Christ come from Galilee? Doesn't Scripture say that the Christ is a descendant of David and from Bethlehem, the city of David?" The crowd was divided over him. Some wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

The officers of the Temple went back to the chief priests who asked them, "Why didn't you bring him?" The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man." The Pharisees then said, "So you, too, have been led astray! Have any of the rulers or any of the Pharisees believed in him? Only these cursed people, who have no knowledge of the Law!"

Yet one of them, Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier, spoke out, "Does our law condemn people without first hearing them and knowing the facts?" They replied, "Do you, too, come from Galilee? Look it up and see for yourself that no prophet is to come from Galilee."

(and then all went home)

(Commentary)

Why did the Pharisees think that no prophet ever came from Galilee, when they knew that the prophet Jonah came from there? Galilee received little support from the rest of Palestine. It was the furthest province from Jerusalem and the most culturally mixed-and. Galileans were viewed as backwards, yokkies by urban jokes. Galileans pronounced Hebrew so crudely that they were not called on to read the Torah in other synagogues. Jesus spoke Aramaic in the Galilean dialect, no doubt encouraging sympathies about him. "Would the Christ come from Galilee?"

So, at least it seems something for us that Jesus came from a small, rural village in Galilee! Having spent his early life there, Jesus understood valuation, poverty, even the pain of oppression. At the time of Jesus, Galilee was treated with contempt, in Galilee. Once was an epithet and ghetto. But, God changed Galilee into a place of glory, a place of honor. But place of Christ's birth. So, no matter what our past or where we come from, God will look at upon us the same and asks his borrowed space Galilee... but only if we turn from sin and turn to Him!

Michael Antonio Gaston Bautista, D.D., a graduate of College Adriano, Quezon City, 1976. Bachelor's degree in philosophy, 1978. Ad. Ordained priesthood, 1984. Ph. 365-2222 ext. 8149. E-mail: mgbautista@yahoo.com. Website: www.geocities.com/mgbautista. Author of "Christ Alternative to the Philippines" (2000). Living Christ (2000). Author's Note: (2005). Living Christ (2006). Author's Note: (2007). Living Christ (2008). Author's Note: (2009). Living Christ (2010). Author's Note: (2011). Living Christ (2012). Author's Note: (2013). Living Christ (2014). Author's Note: (2015). Living Christ (2016). Author's Note:

Cebu girl, 13, raped, slain; suspects are youngsters

By Jeannie Magallanes
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—A 13-YEAR-OLD GIRL WAS gang-raped by six youngsters, aged 13 to 17, and then stabbed 60 times until dead.

The gruesome attack happened past 6 p.m. on March 20 but was only discovered the following evening after one of the suspects surrendered to the police and admitted his participation in the crime.

The girl lived in Barangay Looc in Lapu-Lapu City and was a neighbor, apparently even a friend, of the teenagers who molested and killed her, the police said.

Senior Insp. Mariano Natad, chief of the Lapu-Lapu City Police, said the victim was gang-raped by six suspects and then stabbed to death with a knife and an ice pick.

All the suspects were members of a local gang called "Youngster" and are all residents of the densely populated community where the victim lived, said Natad.

Natad said all the suspects had been arrested but three could not be charged because they were under 15 years old and protected from facing any criminal charge by by the Juvenile Act (Republic Act 9344) endorsed by Sec. Francisco Pangilinan.

No charges

The oldest suspect, 19-year-old Melanio Bardin Bonis, would definitely be charged with rape with homicide, Natad said.

The suspects aged 16 and 17 years old, Natad said, could not be charged until they had been evaluated by the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

The agency will determine if they had acted with discernment when they committed the crime.

Natad said the three suspects under 15 would be turned over to DSWD and suggested that they would be released eventually.

"We cannot charge them because of that [legislation]. We are very dismayed with this law but we cannot do anything about this. The parents were also mad after learning that the three minors will be released," said Natad.

The 19-year-old suspect identified as Boy [just his real name] was the first to surrender to a barangay councilman at 7 p.m. on Thursday. He admitted that he had killed the girl in the grassy area of Purok Gumamela in Barangay Looc, but he did not mention anything about rape.

When questioned by the police yesterday morning, Boy confessed that six of them were involved in the rape and murder.

Natad said the boy also told the police where the suspects hid the body of the girl.

The girl's body covered in grass, was found by the police yesterday.

Lawyers urged: Protect the law

BACOLOD CITY—SUPREME COURT Chief Justice Reynato Puno on Thursday called on the country's lawyers to safeguard the law and the poor in an economic crisis. He also warned against a troubled economy's becoming a complete threat to political, civil, and socio-economic rights.

"Look at how poverty has destroyed the implementing effect of our elections," Puno said before some 2,000 lawyers attending the Integrated Bar of the Philippines' 12th National Convention of Lawyers held at the Bacolod Pavilion Hotel and Resort here.

"Elections cannot be free where the majority of the people are poor. They will not really be free to vote. Some of them will just sell out their right to vote. Some will be coerced by their employers or benefactors. For lack of sophistication, some will vote the unknowing," he said.

Puno is spearheading the launching of a 10-point moral force movement on May 9 mainly to address the problem of moral leadership.

The movement will be composed of a cross section of society from government and non-government sectors, and chapters will be created around the country, Puno told reporters here.

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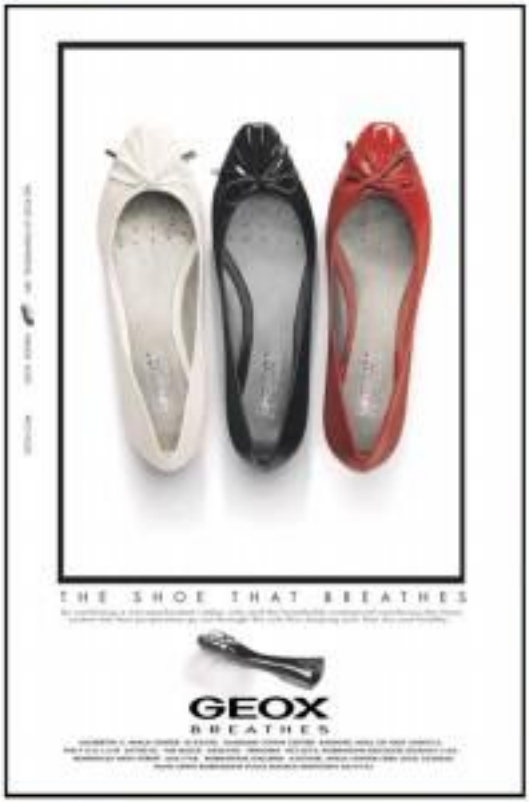

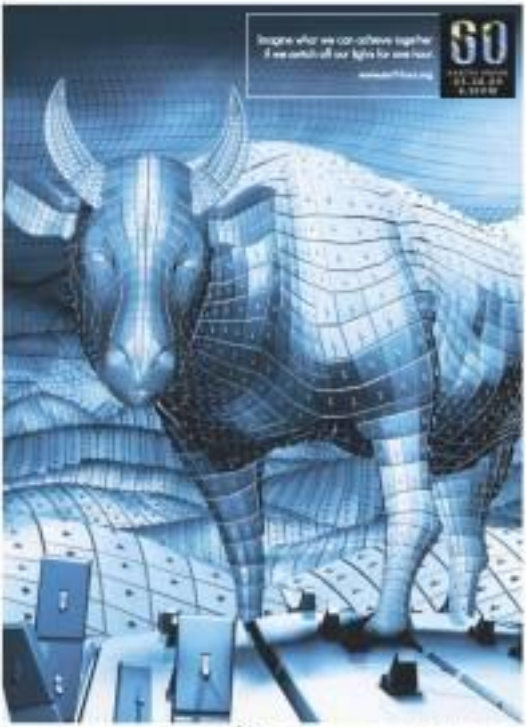

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GMA scraps Independence Day parade to save money

By Jeffrey M. Tupas
and Dennis Santos
@bdanielfloreza

DAVAO CITY—FOR THE FIRST time, President Macapagal-Arroyo has announced there will be no Independence Day parade or Rizal Park, which usually costs the government P30 million to fund. Instead, a mega job fair will be held this year, in light of difficulties caused by the global economic downturn.

Last year, as part of its "Bida Ang Pamamahay," Malacañang made June 9, a Monday, the nonworking Independence Day. That for the first time since Ms Arroyo came to power in 2001.

In this challenging economic times, we must tighten our belts and live within our means... At the national level, we have taken the necessary steps to stop wasteful spending and those measure can be replicated by the provincial governments," Ms Arroyo said some 3,000 local legislators during the 16th national assembly of the Provincial Board Members' League of the Philippines.

Aside from doing away with the Independence Day parade, she also ordered unfavorable measures to save on electricity and fuel costs.

"I have ordered the [reduction] of maintenance and area head expenses by 1.5 percent and allocate those savings for emergency employment for the next six months. I have also directed national offices to undertake electricity and fuel saving measures," Ms Arroyo said.

The target, the President said, was to bring down the consumption of fossil fuel oil by 28 percent and the reduction of power consumption by 10 percent.

"We must live within our means and run a lean and efficient government. This includes continued prudence as we in the national government, with Congress... will mark forward for a balanced budget. We must also invest in key programs for our people in the local and national levels," Ms Arroyo said.

She also said the government would continue to "listen to the voices of the poorest among us with targeted subsidy for food, fuel and fares."

"We must come up with more investments in education, healthcare and infrastructure. And now that we have lowered the budget mix, let us continue with ... support programs to provide assist to affordable... housing," Ms Arroyo said.

The top priority of her administration, she said, was to create jobs and to bring down the price of commodities.

Another focus, the President said, was to give incentives to the private sector to create employment or prevent layoffs.

"One of the things we are doing in the electronic industry—one of the hardest hit industries in the global financial crisis—is I'm encouraging companies I met to lay off their workers and to keep them while there's nothing for the rebound even if they are doing minimal work. They can pay them minimum wage while Manila Technical Education and Skills Development Authority will finance the industry's intensified training skills program," Ms Arroyo said.

3 cops freed after 83 days in NPA captivity as 'Prisoners of War'

From page A1

...three of the International Committee of the Red Cross hiked more than an hour uphill for the turnover that lasted no more than five minutes and involved the two parties signing the MOU on-called "order of release."

The three captives were then reunited with their families who were waiting in an area further downhill.

No signs of ordeal

The soldiers did not exhibit any untoward signs of their 83-day ordeal. They were laughing, were clean-shaven, sported new haircuts and were clean fatigue uniforms.

Carcopino said the rebels had treated them well.

"What we heard really difficult were the long walks when it was raining hard," he said, adding that he considered their capture and imprisonment as just part of their work.

Carcopino's wife Joyce also said that what happened was part of her husband's sworn duty to safeguard the community. She said she was grateful to the people who helped in the negotiations for the release of the three.

RETURN TO FREEDOM Looking dazed, P/Insp. Ben Cunigada, PO1 Marvin Aganon and PO1 Alberto Umali arrive at the Rizal Provincial Capitol in Antipolo City after the NPA signed the order of release. They were ambushed Jan. 5 in Mamalikan town.

'Cooperative'

Ka Ambo Inso, the leader of the NPA rebel team, said their prisoners had been cooperative, even during operations.

"The welfare of the three were closely checked," he said.

About three hours after their release, the three policemen were presented in a press conference at the Rizal provincial capitol, with Reuters, Madrigal and Chief Supt. Perfecto Palad, the Calabarzon police chief.

They were not allowed to speak as the 15-minute press conference and were quickly spirited out of the briefing room by their escorts.

Palad said the three policemen would be undergoing a medical checkup and debriefing.

Thanks to negotiators

Aganon's wife, Barbara, who is four months pregnant, said she learned of her husband's release from a news flash report.

"I was not able to join Joyce (Carcopino's wife) and Grace (Umali's wife) at the turnover because of my condition. We're all very happy. Thank God, it's now over," she said in a phone interview.

She also thanked those who helped in securing the freedom of her husband.

"We owe so much to the negotiators," she said.

"The whole family is so excited," she said.

Carcopino, Umali and Aganon were captured last Jan. 5 when they went to investigate reports that rebels had burned a dump truck in Rodriguez. The three were forced to surrender after they ran out of bullets in a gun battle in which one policeman and two rebels were wounded.

Their capture, the NPA Hanan Armed Command, said they would be set free once they had been "cleared of crimes against the people" and the revolutionary movement.

Tuares lead negotiator

Tiaras, who acted as the lead negotiator for the release, thanked both the military and the NPA for "banking over backwards" to accommodate each other's requests, leading to the safe release of the three officers.

He also cited the roles of Madrigal, Reyes and Undersec. Ric Paz.

Lawyer Tony Rimonti, Madrigal's chief of staff, said the senator had acted as a "facilitator."

He said the National Democratic Front, the political arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines, had contacted the senator two weeks ago and informed her about the NPA's decision to free the three policemen.

Cordial relationship

Rimonti said that Madrigal and the NDF had established a "cordial relationship" in recent years, and that the latter agreed with the group's juice consumption calling for the resumption of the stalled peace talks.

In a phone interview, a elated but jubilant Madrigal said the successful release of the captives was the result of "long, long negotiations."

"The success of this endeavor came because we were discreet and very quiet. Very few people knew about it. Politics did not come into play because too many cooks spoil the broth. The stew cooked by very few cooks who never talked about it," she said.

She said the captives were rattled over "in very good condition."

Asked why the NDF would go to bat, Madrigal said she was the chair of the forum commission on peace and unification, and a major advocate of the resumption of the stalled peace negotiations.

Limited press coverage

"I think they're comfortable with me because I put politics aside. You see there's very few of these coverages. Even my closest assistant did not know when I left my house early this morning," she said.

Madrigal has been visiting the NDF's Utrecht, the Netherlands, headquarters for several years now.

She said the release was a "sign of goodwill on the part of the NDF. They did not ask for a ransom, for anything in return."

She said the NDF was hoping that the gracious act would convince the government to resume the talks.

Letter of apology

Marilyn "Ka Hannah" Amayen, the former NPA member who participated in the ambush and capture of three police officers, sent a letter of apology to the released officers and their families.

"I can't blame you if you're angry with me. However will be hard for you to forgive the people who made you their prisoners," she said in her letter, a copy of which was furnished the inquirer.

She blamed their ordeal and suffering on the Hanan Armed Command operating in Rizal province, of which she was once a member.

'Communist lies'

Amayen said she too had been victim of "communist lies."

According to a military report, Amayen was wounded by her own comrades during the gun battle that resulted in the capture of the three policemen.

Several days later, authorities discovered her taken the area for treatment at the Lourdes Hospital in Rio Mesa, Manila.

She was temporarily trained in a Camp Crame hospital and later ordered transferred to a military hospital in Tanay, Rizal, by the nuns.

She is still staying in the camp and has injured calls by her former rebel colleagues to turn her back on the military. With reports from Jodhe T. Mallari Jr. and Marissa Cinco, Inquirer Southern Luzon, and DJ Yap

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Ping accused of Dacer murder

From page A1

the twin killings, which occurred in November 2000.

Manzano affidavit

The four daughters—Cielito Lim Dacer, Sabina Dacer Rosero, Emily Dacer Hemedes and Amparo Dacer Pineda—based their complaint on the sworn statement executed by former Senior Supt. Cezar Mancao II which claimed Lacson ordered Dacer's murder.

"It is clear from the Manzano affidavit that former Lacson ordered the killing of our father," the lawyer said.

Manzano, himself an accused in the Dacer-Corbito murders, executed the affidavit in the US on Feb. 14. He is expected to turn state witness upon his extradition from the US.

Manzano said he was riding in Lacson's car the month before the murder when he pressured by United Lacson supposedly under the principal mastermind in the case, Senior Supt. Michael Ray Aquino, to kill Dacer and then police officer Reynaldo Bonzon, a Lacson protector.

Manzano claimed he was in front of the city central beside the driver when he heard Lacson and Aquino talking in the back seat.

Order for coverup

Before Lacson gave his supposed order, Aquino had told his boss assured to for Dacer had become Dacer had driven Estrada's car, Manzano said.

Aquino and Manzano were then aware of flyers of the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF), which Lacson also headed at that time.

Manzano said Lacson later ordered him and Aquino to form the committee to stall prosecution.

'Ass to grind'

The Dacer daughters said a new clear from Manzano's affidavit that the PAOCTF had conducted "special operations" outside its mandate.

"Besides Lacson's complicity in the murder of our father and Mr. Corbito is shown further by his appointing Mr. Manzano as head of the investigating team in the case to allow the PAOCTF ... to cover up the involvement of PAOCTF personnel," they added.

The Dacers said Lacson had "an ass to grind" against their father, who had opposed Lacson's appointment as top cop.

"Our father strongly opposed Senator Lacson's appointment as chief of the Philippine National Police during the Estrada administration," the lawyer said.

"This is expressed in one of his letters to then President Estrada," they added.

They said they father told them a few months before his disappearance on Nov. 24, 2000 that if something happened to him, "there should be no one else to blame but Senator Lacson."

The daughters also accused Lacson of obstructing the arrest and prosecution of the detained offenders with his supposed order for Manzano and Aquino to leave the country.

"Senator Lacson even consistently met with Mr. Manzano and Mr. Aquino in the US from October 2000 to September 2003 and provided for them. The makes Senator Lacson criminally liable for violation of Presidential Decree No. 1829," they said.

'Misguided' daughters

Documents submitted to the DOJ showed the Dacer daughters swore on their affidavit on March 23 before lawyer Leandro Cachuca, a Philippine consul in New York.

Lawyers from the Ongkiko Mandoli, Cariñido and Arnaldo Jose Fire submitted the Dacers' affidavit and other supporting documents to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, who said the complaint-affidavit gave basis for the re-opening of the double murder case.

"If the prosecution finds the complaint meritorious, then he can already set the case for hearings," Gonzalez said in a telephone interview.

A complaint-affidavit is not yet a formal charge. Both prosecutors will have to determine if it is backed by sufficient evidence to warrant the filing of a case in court.

Lacson said the Dacer daughters were "grossly misinformed" and "misguided."

In a text message, Lacson said he respected the right of Dacer's family to seek justice. But "in their desire to seek justice, they will be committing a grave serious injustice by implicating me in this crime."

DACER Rape-rally-opposed Lacson appointment as PNP chief

Addressing his family, friends and supporters, the senator reiterated he had nothing to do with the twin murders.

"And so long as truth and evidence will be the basis in resolving this case, I have nothing to fear," he said.

The real story

Lacson reiterated he had personally investigated the double murder case and that he had an idea from the start the real story was ("Ang sinisi ang dapat sisihin").

Asked reaction he would give over the findings of a board claims was filed against him, he said: "I might as a matter of defense."

Lacson said he had talked with a lot of lawyers who told him that Dionesio's affidavit had "no probative value" and would not stand in court without corroboration by witnesses, including his other co-police aide, Glenn Dumlao, and his former driver, Sgt. Reynaldo Dionesio.

Driver a target

That was why he said Dionesio who now a target of harassment by authorities.

Through a common friend, Lacson said he learned Dionesio feared for his life because of the pressure now and then of relatives with illegal plans around his home in Bataan.

"Having come from the police service, he (Dionesio) checked on the plates of those vehicles and found out that the plates were assigned to other vehicles so there was no record of the plates," Lacson said.

Among the vehicles lurking around Dionesio's home were a Ford Everest, a Honda and a Toyota Revo, he said.

"We will have the charges in our court," Lacson's lawyer Alex Acinelio said. "We just hope that those people who will resolve the case from the Department of Justice will be critically independent."

Extradition of ex-Lacson aide from US faces delay

From page A1

representing Aquino, said two of the witnesses he planned to call were Cezar Mancao II and Glenn Dumlao, also former PNP officers, who are charged with Aquino in connection with a 2000 double-murder case.

The Philippine justice department is also seeking the extradition of Mancao and Dumlao and says it will oppose any delay in their return to the Philippines.

The cases involved the abduction, interrogation and murder of two men as part of a "special operation" orchestrated by Aquino, according to an extradition complaint filed on behalf of the Republic of the Philippines by the US Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of North Carolina, where Aquino has been imprisoned.

The victims of the twin slayings were public relations man Salvador "Bubby" Dacer and his driver, Emmanuel Corbito.

Aquino in handcuffs

"We see this as a continuation of a politically motivated prosecution, and we're going to fight extradition," Brennan said.

Aquino, 43, appeared at Thursday's hearing handcuffed and wearing a green jumpsuit provided by the Hudson County Correctional Center, where he is being held.

Aquino, who has been incarcerated since his arrest in the fall of 2008, pleaded guilty and was sentenced in 2007 to 78 months in prison for accepting classified documents from Lieutenant Colonel Philippine Army former US Marine who once worked as an aide to Vice Presidents Al Gore and Dick Cheney.

Reentering on Tuesday

However, last month a federal appeals court reversed the sentence, saying it was based on a mistaken interpretation of federal guidelines, and ordered a resentencing, scheduled for Tuesday in US District Court in Newark.

Aquino could be sentenced to time served, but it is likely he will remain in custody pending conclusion of the extradition dispute.

Gonzalez wants no delay

Aquino's wife, a former FBI intelligence analyst, pleaded guilty to passing the classified documents to Aquino and was sentenced to 30 years in prison. Prosecutors allege the documents were stolen as part of a plot to destabilize and overthrow Philippine President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Aquino, once a senior official in the PNP tied to the United States to escape the murder charges in 2003, surfaced this city, and lived with his wife and son in Queens, New York.

In Manila, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez concedes and the Philippine government would oppose any delay in the extradition of Mancao and Dumlao.

"We will oppose that because that is clearly meant to delay [the extradition of Mancao and Dumlao]," Gonzalez said in a telephone interview.

Why now?

"There was an extradition hearing for Mancao. There was an extradition hearing for Dumlao. Why did he not cause his (controversial) theory?" he said, referring to Brennan.

Gonzalez said the US district attorney would put forward the Philippine government's position before the court. *Reports from AP and Norman Bordadora*

Muslims in Metro hit Abu, seek release of hostages

By Erika Sauler

MUSLIM COMMUNITIES YESterday led simultaneous interfaith rallies to denounce the Abu Sayyaf's abductions of three International Committee of the Red Cross aid workers and to appeal for their immediate and safe release.

Muslims and Christians gathered at the Golden Mosque in Manila, Blue Mosque in Taguig City and Salam Mosque in Quezon City Thay appeal to their abductors to release them without conditions.

A DIFFERENT RALLY Muslims hold an interfaith, simultaneous rally to condemn the kidnapping of the International Red Cross staff during the rally at the Golden Mosque in Quiapo, the Blue Mosque in Taguig City and Salam Mosque in Quezon City They appeal to their abductors to release them without conditions. ALREY DIZ

Store are people's lives. What if they go on with it? If [the military] has to push out, then it should pull out," Presidente Zimbanol, national president of the Ansaluss Rangasamoro People's Association (Mapa), told the Inquirer.

Don't turn Sulu into Jerusalem

In a statement, the Muslim groups said they were supporting a nonviolent change in finding the demilitarization of the Moro homeland and the grant of the right of self-determination to the Bangsamoro.

"We cannot, however, be blind to the violent and terrorist atrocities of these kidnapping activities perpetrated by the Muslims," they said.

Addressing a crowd in Manila, Dilidatan said the victims are of kidnapping innocent people was against Islamic beliefs and did not help people understand Islam.

Doctorate Commissioner Elias Farouq, the imam (leader) during yesterday's ashr (prayer), also condemned the Abu Sayyaf and called for the peaceful release of the hostages.

Out with politics

In the joint statement issued by Alim, rhetoric of Muslim-majority Bagkakaan and Bro. ple's Solidarity Action for Peace, the Muslim groups also called for the rebels non-engagement group not to use the kidnapping for its maneuvers in the 2010 elections and remarks "saddening and resentful in handling the situation."

They appealed to Muslims and other religious groups in Mindanao to break their silence and stand up against the Abu Sayyaf's "inhuman acts that not only violated the human rights of the victims but [are] evil, and violations of the sacred in holy light."

Dilidatan invited the people to a grand interfaith rally to be held at 4 p.m. on Sunday in Plaza Miranda to continue calling for a peaceful resolution to the problems in Mindanao.

He said Sultan Mahid Paddio, a Muslim convert, and Bro. Richard Gordon, chair of the Philippine National Red Cross, had been invited.

Gov't ready to pull back forces to save Jolo hostages

From page A1

area where kidnappers are awaiting operations.

All government forces have therefore been ordered not to launch any attacks, Puno said.

He said he hoped that with the government's "expression of willingness ... to settle this peacefully," the kidnappers would "change decision with the matter of what they intend to do with the hostages."

"The last thing we want is to settle this through the military option. We want, in order this in the best manner possible, where there will be the least possible loss of life," Puno said.

In an emergent message sent to the Philippine government, the ICRC called on the military to pull back troops and halt operations in Jolo, Sulu, for the safety of its three aid workers.

In a statement issued on Thursday night, Alain Aeschlimann, the head of the ICRC Asia-Pacific delegation, said the government should heed the demand of the abductors of Mary-Jean Lacaba of the Philippines, Andreas Notter of Switzerland and Eugenio Vagni of Italy for a troop pullback.

"We make an urgent call to the Philippine authorities to do several things to their power to save the lives of the hostages and not to take any action that could put our colleagues at risk. In particular, we urge the government to refrain from further military operations in the area," Aeschlimann said, adding:

"In the interest of our three staff [members], the ICRC asks the authorities to consider the [kidnappers' demands regarding the position of troops."

Lacaba, Notter and Vagni were kidnapped at gunpoint on Jan. 15, shortly after they inspected a water and sanitation project at the provincial jail in Jolo.

The three hostages, their friends bound by rope, were filmed in at least four places four to five kilometers away from the Abu Sayyaf lair, but earlier backed off.

"We will not surrender the entire province to the capricious demands of a few kidnappers, as much as our hearts bleed for the hostages," Puno said.

"We believe it will be wrong, not just in our country but everywhere in the world, if terrorists are allowed to dictate on government when they should or should not do with respect to the welfare of their citizens," he said.

Families' outrage

Aeschlimann said the last time the hostages contacted the ICRC and their families was on March 22.

"I cannot stress enough that their lives, Eugenio and brothers are going through an extremely difficult time. They are tired, both physically and emotionally. We continue to hope that this ordeal will be over as soon as possible and that they will be back with their families," he said.

Aeschlimann confirmed that Notter's family had appealed to the Swiss government to pressure Philippine authorities to speed up the hostages' release.

"We fully understand the families' outrage that this crisis has gone on for so long," he said. "It is perfectly understandable that the families of Mary Jean, Andreas and Eugenio would want to do everything in their power to get their loved ones back."

Abandonment

Speaking at the same briefing, Indo Gov. Abdulasim Tan said granting Dyad's demand for a troop withdrawal was "tantamount to abandoning the interests of the people of Sulu," especially at a crucial time when they were harvesting crops and feeding people.

"There will not be any semblance of government in the province of Sulu if we go by that," Tan said.

The military was expected to have earlier pulled back troops in response to a promise of Dyad to release one of the hostages in exchange.

But no one was found even after soldiers moved back from an area that had been confining Dyad's group, while the Sulu police management committee worked out a negotiation.

"The Marines until now have back anymore because there's already in their barracks. Unless you want to have them moved to the sea," Puno said.

He said the government was willing to resume a cease-fire with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) whenever the group "is ready to do away with its support to the Abu Sayyaf."

"We are willing to consider any matter that the kidnappers believe constitutes a direct threat to themselves. We're only doing this to allow negotiations to continue," he said.

Both officials said the government continued to be "mystified" by the Abu Sayyaf's motive for holding the aid workers in the absence of a ransom demand.

Tan, however, said Dyad had once asked "if I could lend him P5 million."

But I told him I'm looking where I could borrow that way talk," the governor said.

What about the others?

Meanwhile, a former kidnap victim of the Abu Sayyaf said the government appeared to be neglecting the fate of the ICRC aid workers that it had forgotten the plight of others to decide on rescue issues.

"What about the other kidnap victims?" said Prof. Octavio Dinampo who, along with comedian reporter Cesi Bolipata and her cousin, was kidnapped by the Abu Sayyaf's bandits in Sulu in June 2000.

Dinampo said the government had given much importance to Lacaba, Notter and Vagni "and hardly a word for other kidnap victims still in the hands of different captors in Muslim mindanao."

"Political interference shows a high sense of bias and favoritism for foreigners over its own citizens," he told the Inquirer in Zamboanga City on the phone.

Dinampo is currently in Washington, D.C., where he is a visiting scholar at the American University. He was interviewed by phone under the Asia Foundation's William E Public Fellowship-in-conflict resolution.

He said among the other kidnap victims who needed government attention were the six workers from Naga in Zamboanga Sibugay and Lamitan, Gov. in Zamboanga City; a 9-year-old boy from Lamitan City; Linh Patrik of the Rhizobium Foundation Inc.; and Sri Lankan priest-trainee Gama Jaleel of the Shrankhind Peacebuilders. With reports from Sofia S. Alpeda in Zamboanga City, AP

COMMENDED Lanao del Norte Governor Imelda Dimaporo and policemen on patrol were in Indanan in Sulu, where the Abu Sayyaf gunmen holding the 3 Red Cross aid workers were being held. At top Red Cross official is speaking to the government to pull back its forces from the danger zone to allow the fact-safe release of the three hostages.

TOUGH TALK His troops are to be pulled out as pulled back and exchanges all contacts in the area, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno (left) told Sulu officials the government position with Sulu Gov. Abdusakur Tan at a press conference on the Red Cross staff hostage situation on Friday.

House ruling party on Cha-cha offensive by April 13

From page A1

Speaker if he would help get into the Cha-cha vote. He said he expected the Cha-cha proponents to succeed in getting the Silladuan measure approved and upheld, in case of a Supreme Court challenge, before the President's State of the Nation Address in July.

Nograles said he believed the necessary votes to open to Cha-cha as long as the changes sought are strictly limited to amending the constitutional restrictions on foreign investments in the Philippines.

"My feedback from senators is that they are for it if it is well defined and narrow," Nograles said. They said 'we are for that as long as that would be all [there is] to it," said Nograles, who did not name the senators he talked to or how many they were.

Nograles said his HB 757, which has been supported for plenary debate by the House committee on constitutional amendments, sought only to give foreign businessmen the same privileges as their domestic counterparts when investing in the Philippines.

The bill would remove the 60-40 equity restrictions as well as the constitutional ban against foreigners owning such protected sectors as land ownership and the media industry.

'No more hiding'

Nograles said he would prefer HB 757 to be debated on the floor rather than in media.

"We are handling this like it's a just an ordinary bill or resolution. It's better to make this transparent. So more hiding. If we don't start debating on it, it will only mean more insinuation and charges that this is just a dance," he said.

Before he came out in support of Cha-cha, speculation were rife that Nograles would be ousted by administration allies because of his soft stance on Charter change.

Yesterday, the House City congressman scaped lavish praises from President Macapagal-Arroyo who was visiting his hometown.

"I would like to greet and give my best wish to Speaker Prospero Nograles for his leadership of the House of Representatives," Ms. Arroyo said in a speech at the 28th National Assembly of the Provincial Board Members League of the Philippines.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said that Ms. Arroyo's praise for Nograles should not be seen in the context of the strong stand that he has taken on Charter change.

Remonde said Cha-cha was not on the President's mind, even if her House ally, led by Nograles, supported it.

He said the President stayed distant to lawmakers. "The President has continued to respect the leadership of the House, it being a co-equal branch," he said.

But even key allies of the President have their doubts about the House Cha-cha move.

'Stop dreaming'

Former Congressman Prospero Pichay, the ruling Lakas-CMD vice president for Mindanao, said the administration must "stop dreaming" that they can effect Charter change ahead of the national elections next year.

"The President also knows about the timeline, that it's physically impossible to pass it," Pichay said in a phone interview.

Even Remonde agreed, saying that the Commission on Elections did not have the budget on the time to conduct the process.

"All political observers agree that there's not enough time for that issue. I agree with that observation," he told reporters.

Pichay said the Silladuan constituent assembly resolution would entail lengthy floor debates and a legal review by the Supreme Court.

In the end, the process will be overtaken by the filing of candidacies for the May 2010 elections, he said.

"It's physically impossible. You have to analyze your feet on the ground and stop the feeling or unrelief thinking that you can amend the Constitution," he said.

Kampi-Lakas merger

Pichay said Mr Arroyo herself was aware of this, "that's why she called both parties for the majority coalition] to continue to merge in preparation for 2010. They should read that as a signal."

Last January, the President ordered a merger of Lakas and her own party, the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi).

Aksyon ally administration lawmakers are also opposed to Charter change, Pichay said. "It's not lead to drama."

Pichay said the President cannot stop the lawmakers from pushing for Charter change. "They're independent-minded. Those are many of them who want to do Cha-cha," he said.

Negros Oriental Rep. George Arnaiz, another close ally of the President, yesterday said he would not sign the constitutional assembly resolution.

Suspicious

"People are suspicious that there might be a hidden agenda. So I feel that this is no longer the right time to change the Constitution," said Arnaiz, a lawyer who used to be a strong advocate of the constituent assembly mode.

He said he now believed that constitutional amendments will have to be done through a constitutional convention whose members should be elected in the 2010 elections.

Arnaiz said he believed the move to circumvent Charter change was an initiative of some House members. He said no one from Malacañang has tried to solicit his support for Cha-cha.

And even if Malacañang were to ask him to support it, he said he would not change his stand as he already gave his word to his constituents.

Arnaiz also believes the the House cannot amend the Constitution without the participation of the Senate.

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile is for the two Houses to act together. If so ordinary bill has to pass through the Senate before it becomes law, there with definite reason that when you want to change the basic law of the land, [it] should also pass the Senate, "he said.

Executive appeal

Opposition Sen. Francis Escudero reminded the ruling Lakas to withdraw his support for the Cha-cha even if it would mean losing the speakership.

"I urge and challenge the Speaker to give clarity to the statement of the House Cha-cha [was]. He should stand for ground for the people even at the expense of losing his position," he said.

Escudero noted that the latest Pulse Asia survey showed that two out of every three Filipinos did not favor changing the Constitution at this time.

'Real destabilizers'

Another presidential aspirant, United Opposition presidential candidate Senator Aquino Noynoy wanted that convening a constituent assembly would lead to political unrest.

Binay said the House allies of the President were "the real political destabilizers" for proposing to convene a constituent assembly. With reports from Jerry Esplo, Jessamine Angeles-Mangun, Michael Lim Ubac and Marlon Ramos

PAPER TRAIL

Ex-DBP chair charged with graft

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE PAPER TRAIL APPEARED TO SHOW it all.

After shifting through piles of receipts and expense reports, the Office of the Ombudsman said it came across a former chair of the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) using government funds to cover his various social appearances by dropping names in the United States outside his runs on official business.

The Ombudsman's Field Investigation Office (FIO) said yesterday in a statement that it had formally charged in a preliminary investigation DBP chair Vladimir Mahiquin II for allegedly claiming P9,01,000 in "irregular reimbursements" during a stint at Hotel Inter-Continental New York and Washington between May and June 2006.

The preliminary investigation will require Mahiquin, also a former president of the Philippine Export and Insurance Company, to file a counter-affidavit to defend himself from graft and misleading charges.

In his report, the FIO noted that based on a summary of expenses and receipts Mahiquin filed for reimbursement, he appeared to have "visited several stores, restaurants, museums, and specialty shops."

A table of expenses included in the statement released by the Office of the Ombudsman showed that the former DBP chair allegedly claimed $1,000 in reimbursement for items he bought on May 27, 2006, at Marshall Field's, a department store and another $600 for items purchased at the swank design Ralph Magistrate.

The statement also identified shops in the US store Hallmark allegedly bought items worth $200 at each shop for which he filed for reimbursement. The stores were: The Container Store, Bed Bay Cards, Tower Records, Fisher Gift, Borders Books and Music, Sharper Image and Gap, among others.

The Office of the Ombudsman added that Mahiquin also incurred "unnecessary and extravagant reimbursements" amounting to more than P60,000 for the expenses of his representative, whose name was not immediately available, in meetings held at the DBP.

In the same statement, the Office also announced it was conducting a preliminary investigation on Ted Regalado-Jr. Board (TRB) chief administrative officer Ramir M. Lesaca who failed to declare properties worth more than P1.8 million in his 2007 Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN).

Of these alleged undeclared assets, around P.36 million were in the form of cash deposits.

The FIO said that among Lesaca's undeclared assets were a house and lot in Forbes Road, purchased from P1.5 million in P640,000 Mitsubishi Adventure and P580,000, representing capital investments to Euroline Computer Services and Trading, a business venture registered under the name of his wife.

Neither did Lesaca declare cash deposits worth P14,283,000 reportedly belonging to him, the FIO added.

Admin bets pared down to 3

By TJ Burgonio

THE ADMINISTRATION COALITION has reduced to three the number of its possible senatorial-bets for next year's presidential election.

"I believe the process has been narrowed down to three," Lawrence Gibbs Chiaffo, presidential political adviser and senior deputy executive general of the ruling Lakas-CMD, said in a text message.

Press Secretary Cerge Remonde identified three of the faces on Vice President Noli de Castro and Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro.

But he added: "Of course, again, we are not ruling out our other allies, who have expressed intention to run for President like Benny Fernando, Sen. [Richard] Jack Gordon and the others."

Remonde sounded the need to change in the coalition which up to its selection process in the runup to the filing of the certificate of candidacy late this year for the May 2010 elections.

"Politics is the art of the impossible. So it will not come as impossible again that we will be going to [from outside of the present administration, but I would rather leave the formal announcement of this matter to our good friend, Secretary Claudio," he said in a text blog.

According to Claudio, the criteria for the selection of the standard bearer include winning ability, track record of support for the Arroyo administration and presidential qualifications.

In this direction, Sen. Manuel Roxas said he was willing to join efforts to come up with a consensus candidate to bolster the political movement in the 2010 presidential election.

"I am willing to engage Kiko Pangilinan and all other reform groups so we can find ways to unify our efforts for the winner in the process of change and a coalition of worth which are the end issues in the 2010 elections," Roxas said in a statement.

The Kapa Sama Movement asked Roxas on Thursday to join in a 15-person multi-style selection process for the 2010 elections.

Aside from Roxas, the movement which is composed of civil society groups is also pushing Pampanga Gov. Ed Panlilio and Isabela Gov. Grace Padaca to take part in the proposed 15 primary-style selection process.

Roxas, president of the Liberal Party, said he "is not willing to run with fringe groups standing and change to happen in the country.

"The values and issues we share in the growing reform constituency are much, much larger than any of us. We represent, fight for and share the struggle with the people," he said.

Harry Roque, director of the Youth Leadership and Social Entrepreneurship of the Ateneo School of Government and lead convener of the Kapa Sama Movement, said the group was also open to other potential candidates.

He said detained Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, who is reportedly seeking a Senate seat, had requested a meeting with Kapa Sama leaders.

Kapa Sama is pushing Pangasinan Rep. Aurang Ed Panlilio to run for presidency, stating he is a "winnable" candidate.

"If he's not winnable, then who are so many people threatened? The reality here is already getting over-think," he said. He preserves at a media forum on Wednesday.

Both said there are clear "public stance" for someone like Panlilio to join the presidential race.

He cited pledges ranging from $10 to $1 million from overseas Filipino workers supporting Panlilio. The pledges have been expressed opponents to run for the post but has not yet made a decision. With reports from Christine D. Avendaño and DJ Yap

Kidnapping caught on camera

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THEY WERE ON UNDER DAM-ron.

The chief of police of Tapaig City said yesterday that video footage and still photographs of the kidnapping of two high school students during G-8 Boat last week captured on their state-of-the-art Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras had been submitted to the Police Anti-Crime Emergency Response (PACER), the local agency investigating the abduction for ransom case.

But the Supt. Emelio Pancratius Gascon refused to say whether or not the footage was clear, saying this could jeopardize ongoing search operations for the suspects.

The victims were on their way to school and were making a right turn on East Service Road from G-8 Road when their sports utility van was flagged down by armed men wearing police uniforms on board by schoolpoint.

Five days later, the two students, their aunty and driver were released by the kidnappers upon payment of P1.5 million.

"The family has refused to talk to us about it, but we understand that just to have the victims are coordinating with them to the investigation of the incident," Gascon said.

The police chief also defended his men in blue uniform, saying they were immediately dispatched to the scene and an alarm had been raised as the van that had been commandeered by the suspects when they made their getaway with the victims on board. The van was later recovered in Quezon City on the same day of the incident.

"It is unfortunate that the kidnapping happened in Tapaig, that I can recognize it's a temporary set-post opening an unconscious source in saying that no checkpoint should be investigated, considering that we had been kept in performing our duties," Gascon said.

He added that the arming of police or military officers was a common and/or upwards of crime rate meant to combine offensive and to avoid detection. Local police also conduct checkpoints at night, he stressed, adding that its operations were always supervised by an officer with members from the Special Weapons and Tactics team and the Police Community Precinct, among others.

Gascon said police were pursuing several leads on the suspects' identities, but declined to give details.

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Warrant for arrest of Panlilios recalled

By Fe Zamora

A MANILA JUDGE HAS RECALLED the order to arrest Princess Grace Ermita Panlilios and four others charged with separately abducted Aniela Ilinadi over the alleged illegal sale of the Lasuria Hotel two years ago.

Judge Amor A. Reyes of the Regional Trial Court Branch 32 in Manila also ordered a 60-day suspension of the arraignment and trial of Panlilios and cohorts Jose Marcel Panlilio, Marlo Celestial, Nicole Monis and Hermenio Valerio "in order to complete the determination of probable cause" as petitioned by lawyers of Panlilio in a motion for reconsideration.

The suspension is effective until May 30.

The case stemmed from the questioned sale of the Lasuria Hotel by the Panlilio-controlled Rizal Park Hotel Inc. (RPHI) to Resources Holding Corp. using a purportedly "fake" IDs.

The sale was questioned by the H.E. Heacock Resources Corp., which claimed to own the genuine title. Heacock claimed it bought the property from the Panlilios in 1971.

Heacock is controlled by the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos' youngest daughter, Irene, and her husband, Gregorio Ilusorio III.

Built in 1918 on a 499-sq m lot at the corner of Del Kalaw and Roxas Boulevard, the Lasuria Hotel is a six-story structure that used to host American dignitaries, including US President Dwight Eisenhower. It stands just across the US Embassy and is within walking distance from the official block.

The Panlilio-Heacock case has revealed that the Lasuria Hotel had become a part of the assets supposedly illegally amassed by Marcos during his rule from 1965 to 1986.

Trader in lamppost scandal wa

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SANDIGANBAYAN PROSECUTORS "miserably failed" to prove his guilt, a private contractor implicated in the alleged conspiracy of some P365 million worth of decorative lampposts installed in Cebu in 2006 has asked the Sandiganbayan First Division to dismiss the graft charges filed against him.

In his motion, businessman Isabelo Bruna, owner of Islands Construction and Equipment Supply Co. Inc., noted that the Office of the Ombudsman, which probed and filed the case, had "almost two years" to build its case and "yet it miserably failed."

This developed after the anti-graft court's Second Division dismissed last week one of the graft charges against Bruna over the same case after the prosecutors itself admitted in open court it had weak evidence against all the accused.

This case, Bruna is asking the First Division that the information filed against him be quashed and the charges against him be dismissed.

Insufficient evidence

The prosecution is reinvestigating the case against Bruna after admitting it had insufficient evidence but Bruna said that weakened his right to a speedy trial.

Some 1,000 lampposts were installed in Mandaue, Cebu and Lapu-Lapu cities for the 12th Summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations more than two years ago. The Office of the Ombudsman charged nine public works executives, 14 local officials and two businessmen with graft over the alleged overpricing.

Saying the prosecutors could "falsified" documents against him, Bruna had earlier asked the First Division for a reinvestigation. However, he later sought to withdraw his motion after he accused the prosecutors of "a flaking eagerness to raise the defect of lack of probable cause."

Bruna said the reinvestigation "is clearly intended to enable the prosecution to avail of a second round of preliminary investigation to obtain additional evidence to cure the defect of lack of probable cause."

Bruna told the First Division

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FIRST GEN FOR EARTH HOUR

Federico R. Lopez, president and CEO of First Gen Corporation, as well as managing director for energy of parent firm First Philippine Holdings Corporation (FPHC), reaffirms the Lopez Group's support for the environment by joining the signup ceremonies for Earth Hour. First Gen and FPHC, as entire their subsidiaries, will switch off the lights in their head offices from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. today to show their support for the Earth Hour. As the largest Filipino-owned independent power producer and as the country's leading clean and renewable energy company, First Gen said it is committed to protect the environment by integrating into its business plans and programs the development and use of clean, indigenous and renewable sources of energy, as well as implementing various environmental projects and activities.

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OPINION

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Reckless

EDITORIAL

IN CHALLENGING ECONOMIC TIMES, THE GOVernment must tighten its belt and live within its means just like the average Filipino household," President Macapagal-Arroyo said on Wednesday. She said government agencies must cut waste to free funds for programs that would provide incentives to the private sector to generate more jobs as well as help the poor by subsidizing the prices of food and fuel. "We must live within our means and run a lean and efficient government," she reasoned. "This includes continued fiscal prudence on the part of every agency."

Minimizing waste, living within one's means, exercising fiscal prudence—no one, government included, can go wrong by following these precepts, in good times or bad. But we don't know if Ms Arroyo is the right person to advise anyone about asking money wisely. Not especially after she approved a national government budget that promises to send the deficit up, up and away.

Two weeks ago, the President signed into law the P1.414-trillion budget for 2009. That amount is P108 billion higher than last year's budget, but administration officials have justified the increase by citing the need to create jobs at a time when factories are closing and workers are being sent home from their jobs overseas, to tide the poor over the economic crisis and to build infrastructure that will help rev up a sputtering economy. What cannot be as easily justified is how Congress, with Malacañang's consent, tampered with the appropriations bill in ways that will bloat the deficit and add some more to the wasteful and graft-laden expenditure of public funds.

The biggest revision made on the budget submitted by Malacañang was the addition of a P50-billion congressional stimulus package to fund additional infrastructure projects and expand health and social services. To fund this package, Congress sliced the amounts from the P302 billion appropriation for debt service. But since there is a law mandating the automatic appropriation of any sum needed for the servicing of government debts, the net effect of the cut is to increase the budget—a fact the bicameral conference acknowledged when it said in its report that the stimulus package "will increase the deficit from P302 billion to P352.1 billion." This is a violation of the constitutional provision that says Congress cannot increase the budget proposed by the Executive Branch, but after making some noises about vetoing the P50-billion insertion, Malacañang let it pass.

Now the Filipino people are stuck with a budget that will bloat not only the deficit but also the pockets of lawmakers and some other officials. That P50-billion additional appropriation is nothing but another—and much bigger—pork barrel on top of the old Priority Development Assistance Fund which allocates P200 million to each senator and P70 million to each member of the House of Representatives.

The biggest share of the additional pork—P67.3 billion—was given to the Department of Public Works and Highways, which has been throwing money away on useless projects like the installation of cat's eyes in lonely provincial roads or overpriced lampposts such as those in Cebu. If that department has dislodged the Bureau of Customs as the most corrupt government agency in the eyes of Filipinos, that's all right as far as Congress and Malacañang are concerned. Better in fact, as it has become the biggest source of kickbacks. Some people need money—lots of it—to get reelected or to get their candidates elected in 2010.

Not too long ago, administration officials were talking about balancing the budget before Ms Arroyo's term ends in 2010. Now falling revenues and the worldwide recession have made that objective impossible and unwise. But precisely because the nation is in crisis, there should be no room for improvisation, especially when it comes to budgeting. What is what both Malacañang and Congress have done, with the harrowing result that no one can even see how big the budget deficit is going to be. In July when Malacañang submitted the proposed budget, it said the deficit would be limited to P182 billion. Last March 13 when the President signed the General Appropriations Act, budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said the deficit would reach P377.7 billion. This week Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ralph Recto said it could soar to as high as P500 billion. So much guessing seems to be going on, and it is not reassuring.

Fiscal prudence? Recklessness is more like it.

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Religion and politics according to Pope Benedict XVI

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

BEFORE HE BECAME POPE BENEDICT XVI, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger was head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In this role, he was in charge of defending the sanctity and meaning of the Church's doctrines against a range of alien interpretations. On April 20, 2005, this chief "theologian" of previous pontiffs John Paul II and Benedict XVI became their leader.

It is important to point this out because Benedict XVI is probably the shrewdest and most intellectually prepared of all those who had the rare opportunity to lead the world's largest religion. Out of curiosity, I started to read the writings of this new Pope. I was amazed at its coherence how well he grasped the complexities of the modern world, and how resourceful he was to define the Church's role in the face of modernity. His reputation as a conservative precedes him, but this label is the least of all the terms to use in reference to his thought. Benedict strikes me as a true modern—perhaps the first modern Pope—one who understands and recognizes the growing differentiation and autonomy of the various spheres of humanity.

In your mind's eye, picture a Venn diagram that represents the relationship between politics and religion, state and church, and the pursuit of justice in relation to the service of love, the first inspired by terms "Render Caesar his," deals precisely with these questions. Lucid and deeply philosophical, this encyclical perhaps the best available guide to understanding the proper understanding of its role in the modern world. This is of immense interest to me, not as citizen or a Catholic, but as a student of modernity. Here I present what I think constitutes the Church's position on these issues...issues that are of great relevance to our present situation in the Philippines.

Benedict states the principle of church and state separation simply: "The state may not impose religion, yet it must guarantee religious freedom and harmony between the followers of different religions. But his part, the Church, as the social expression of Christian faith, has a proper independence and is not required, on the basis of his faith, as a community that the state must recognize. The two spheres are distinct, yet always interrelated."

The separation of the two spheres is underrated by most people; it is the innovation, I think, that has caused confusion. Benedict's position is finely nuanced, and nature has an inner clarity. "The just ordering of society and the state is a central responsibility of politics. As Augustine once said, a state that is not governed according to justice would be just a bunch of thieves." I love this!

Justice is both the aim and the intrinsic criterion of all politics." I think every democratic citizen readily agrees with that. But Benedict goes further—he follows Kant and lays down the premises for the Church's role in the pursuit of justice (which, he grants, is the principal function of politics). His argument is compelling. "Politics is more than a mere mechanism for defining the rules of public life. Its origin and its goal are found in justice, which, by its very nature, has to do with ethics. The state must inevitably face the question of how justice can be achieved here and now. But ... what is justice? The problem is one of practical reason; but for reason to be put into action correctly, it must undergo constant purification, since it exercises of be completely free of the danger of a certain ethical blindness caused by the dazzling effect of power and special interests. How politics and faith meet."

In Benedict, faith is a "purifying force for reason itself....faith liberates reason from its blind spots.... faith enables reason to do its work more effectively and to see its proper object more clearly." I love this formulation, but this is where theology and sociology part ways. The question to whose faith? Benedict unhesitatingly—his question, not others—is God's faith. Catholic moral doctrine, he says, "has no intention of giving the Church power over the state. Even less is it an attempt to impose on those who do not share the faith ways of thinking and modes of conduct proper to faith. Its aim is to help purify reason and to contribute here and now, to the acknowledgement and attainment of what is just."

"To help purify reason"—what does it mean in politics? "The Church wishes to help form consciences in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the truly authentic requirements of justice, as well as greater readiness to act accordingly, even when this might involve conflict with one's personal interests." If this is not clear enough, Benedict makes it even clearer—I imagine—for people like Dananggan governor Al Ildefonso, and for priests like Fr. Robert Reyes, about his future role in Philippine politics.

"The Church cannot and must not take upon herself the political battle to bring about the most just society possible. She cannot and must not replace the state. Yet at the same time she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice. She has to play her part through rational argument and reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice, which always demands sacrifice, cannot prevail and prosper. A just society must be the achievement of politics, not the Church. Yet the promotion of justice through efforts to bring about openness of mind and will to the demands of the common good concerns the Church deeply."

• • •

Comments: rsquibit.love@gmail.com

A victim thrice over

GET REAL

Sobhi Gollan-Montaña

"FOR MANY WHO HAVE BEEN SERIALLY harassed, the aftermath can be more stressful and/or damaging than the original harassment itself. The combination of retaliation, backlash and victim-blaming can turn even a mild transgression into a major political nerve victim or harassee. While there are morally polluted workplaces, which are supposed to protect the identity of those involved, particularly in academic institutions, most often confidentiality is not respected, or the harassee or victim is subjected to the burden of proof to punish the victim for reporting or speaking out."

So Miki Espinosa can tell you.

Had I previously written about her case in this space (on Jan. 31, 2009, where she was named) and three months ago, when she was not named. I'm sure that her recall she is an assistant professor at the Technological University of the Philippines (TUP). She claims to have been sexually harassed on various occasions by Godofredo Gallega, the president of TUP (and I have to say that her story rings true), sent a portrait of a female and a call reading, Jan. 10, 2007 where, at the urging of a couple of her colleagues who had witnessed the last harassment attempt, she finally made "mention" to the vice president for academic affairs, her friend and her boss, who also happened to be the girlfriend of the alleged serial harasser. Her friend's response: "Ay, bakit ka kasi nagsalita sa kanya?" (Why did you speak to him?)

The decision to file charges did not come easy. There was her personal and professional relationship with Gallega's girlfriend. Evangeline Dayrap. (She later turned out to be the wife, which is an interesting story in itself, because apparently the two had been living in the closet even as Dayrap was promoted to dean and then vice president upon the strong recommendation of her husband, who is now facing separation charges.) And there was the natural distaste for "unsavables." Miki was in such emotional turmoil over the episode that for a year's hours of absence without pay. Due to financial constraints, she had to report for duty after one semester.)

But finally, she filed charges against Gallega with the Civil Service Commission (administrative) and the Office of the Ombudsman (criminal) sometime in December 2007.

That's when the retaliation, backlash and victim blaming began, to wit: stories circulated about her, about her lesbian records and aberrant-seeking behavior (the usual suspects in victim blaming). She was asked to clear herself of her courses (well into the semester) on the grounds that her loads had not cooked; she was subjected to public humiliation by Gallega, who took head exception to her suggestions during a faculty assembly.

That's the context in the two colleagues who had been supportive and encouraging suddenly changed their tune, and signed affidavits against her; a superior to whom she had told her story and had promised support and even legal help, made a 180-degree turn.

The faculty association, which continues to support her, and which filed not only complaints, but also corruption charges against Gallega, is under threat of being replaced by another union allegedly supported by Gallega and his ally and supporter, Nina Stanley, who as representative of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) heads TUP's board of regents (BOR). The president of that association and current faculty regent, Dr. Juliet Grasso, has been asked to step down by Gallega and his allies, but she will not do so without a court order. Good for her.

What is amazing is that the administration of TUP are reportedly being asked to sign petitions for Gallega's rise in retention (!)—and many are signing. It is all this because of a deep-seated belief in Gallega's leadership?

A more credible explanation would be that because of the BOR's sins of omission or commission, they have received very strong signals that Gallega is untouchable. What else? Very simple.

The OIC for December ordered Gallega's preventive suspension...which is a remedy "to prevent the accused or OIC tampering the material source of the investigation with his influence and authority over possible witnesses or..." Which is what he was doing, obviously. Actually, the OIC has turned out to be Miki's only knight in shining armor—the Ombudsman, who's having made a big fuss boo, has not been heard from at all.

Yet, more than three months later, Gallega is still very much in the saddle—at the writing, he is presiding over TUP's commencement exercises, with no less than CHed chairman Emmanuel Angeles as speaker. To a hardly unbiased observer, what would that suggest?

How come Gallega is still around? Well, the BOR held off on preventive suspension, citing that he had filed a motion for reconsideration (MR) with the CSC, and the CHEd lawyer advised that he not be suspended. But then, the CSC turned down Gallega's MR on Feb. 17. So no more excuses, right?

Wrong. The BOR still refuses to suspend him. Its total disregard of the CSC's order. One government entity defying the authority of another with impunity. The BOR cannot even give the excuse that Gallega has filed a petition for a temporary restraining order with the Court of Appeals, because that Court, as of the writing, has not issued any TRO.

What the message Gallega is untouchable. Better stay on his good side.

Is the CSC a toothless tiger? A knight in shining armor with neither horse nor weapon? Can it keep BOR dragged in the dirt and get away with it? Is it content to going to be a victim three times...of sexual and social harassment and, then, of injustice?

Hunger: down for one quarter

LAST MONDAY'S SWS SOCIAL WEATHER SURVEY reported hunger showing a decline to 15.5 percent as surveyed in February 2009 from the record high 23.7 percent as surveyed in December 2008, was quickly cited by Press Secretary Cerge Remonde as evidence that the administration-led anti-hunger programs are effective.

Indeed, this February's survey result continues to cause puzzling loud on the tables of the present Filipino families in the polarity of the "freedom," he said, according to BusinessWorld that day.

At the risk of being called a party-pooper, I must point out that the movement, with a margin of error, cannot be called a "trend." It takes at least two consecutive movements in the same direction to define a trend.

The precise thing to say is that the previous quarterly trend of three upward movements, from 15.7 percent in March 2008 to 16.1 percent in June 2008, and then to 18.4 percent in September 2008, and then to 23.7 percent in December 2008, has just been broken. This break is of course a good thing. However, it needs to be reinforced, and not just for one more quarter, but even much further into the future.

That upward trend in 2008 was, incidentally, preceded by two drops in the hunger percentage: first from 21.3 in September 2007 to 16.2 in December 2007, and then to 15.7 in March 2008. Thus there was enough room for hunger to barely qualified to be called a "trend," turned out to be no basis for celebration.

It's essential to keep in mind the entire series of hunger surveys. From July 1998 to February 2009, there have been 44 quarterly SWS surveys of involuntary hunger in the Philippines, using the same geographical figure for the National Capital Region, the Balance of Luzon, the Visayas, and Mindanao. The statistical methodology of these SWS surveys has been consistently maintained over the years. These SWS surveys findings, whether favorable or unfavorable, are promptly reported in the public. Compared to the Philippines, no other country in the world, to my knowledge, has an equally rigid survey system for tracking hunger.

The unprecedented high hunger in recent years is also reported by the Social Weather Stations. Dr. Orlando of Economics professors Dante Canlas, Benjamin Diokno and Felipe Medalla, who presented a "Philippine Road Map" to the business

Social Climate

Mahar Mangahas

community last Wednesday—who are open to all sources of statistics, whether governmental or not. However, it is being ignored by government analysts, as though they are under instruction to make use of official statistics only, even if such statistics are very result in tracking hunger.

How has hunger actually moved in the past decade? In 1998-2003, hunger fell to a certain extent, but starting 2004 its trend was upward. Here are the annual averages of the 1981 quarterly percentages of households that experienced involuntary hunger within the previous three months.

Year	HH Hunger
1998 (3 surveys)	11.4
1999	8.3
2000	10.0
2001	11.4
2002	10.1
2003	7.0
2004	11.8
2005	14.3
2006	14.7
2007	17.6
2008	18.3
2009 (February)	15.5
Average 1998-2009	12.6

The overall average of 12.6 percent is a rough measure of the "hunger climate" from 1998 to the present. The year-to-year percentages, on the other hand, refer to the "hunger weather."

In every year up to 2004 the hunger weather was below-average. However, in every year starting 2005 the hunger weather was above-average. This three has been an unfavorable "climate change" during the past five years. Reversing this change requires radical changes in the policy and governance environment from what was in place during 2005-2008.

The 15.5 percent hunger rate in the new survey of February 2009 is also above the 1998-2009 average. And so there is no reason to jump for joy over this rate. What is needed is more only to contain and strengthen the most promising anti-hunger programs, but also to identify and eliminate the program failures that were probably responsible for the unfavorable change in hunger climate in the first place. To be truly entitled to take credit for good times, one should also assume responsibility for bad times.

More specifically, the most promising anti-hunger program appears to be the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), since these are individual-targeted on the poor. The appropriate monitoring and evaluation devices for this program should be applied convincingly. On the other hand, my initial guess as to the most effective anti-hunger program in the size-augmentation program, which may have been four times as large as the CCT in 2008. Whether or not the latter is now trusted to reduce hunger, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, or the Department of Agriculture?

* * *

The "Philippine Midterm Progress Report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)," published by the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) in 2007, uses no SWS data whatsoever.

Since the government looks to some direct measures of hunger, the report resorts to proxy indicators: (a) the percentage of underweight children aged 5 years or less—which was 24.5 circa 1998 and 28.6 in "current year" 2003, and (b) the percentage of households with per capita income below the full dietary requirement for energy—10.4 circa 1998 and 16.9 in 2000. The source of the proxies is the infrequently run National Statistics Survey. The report's claim of a "high" probability of meeting the goal of halving hunger by 2015 from its level in 1990 is ignorant of the change in the hunger climate since 2005.

* * *

Contact SWS: mmo@sws.org.ph or mahar@sws.gobenildsws.org.ph

The bully

MY MOTHER IS A BULLY. HE IS A SELF-CENTERED, DOMINANT, obnoxious jerk. I have never met anybody that I hated more than him.

I was born in 1990, when he was already 20 years old. You would think that because he was older by a decade he would be the tamest, grown-up one and the typical annoying little sister. If you did, you would be dead wrong. It is as though my body got stuck in the womb and my mother was born in a three-year-old body with all the emotional extremes and get our personalities combined. I am the embodiment of genius while he is a total moron. I am as thoughtful as he is rude. I am the same kind, shining soul that he is the same hard, heavy and the same parents and the same blood running through our veins, we live total, but different lives.

Young Blood

Ayesah S. Tecson

We seem to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twenty-something and below. —Ed.

My family isn't the kind that usually "bonds." Even though our house is not unlike a bar, we hardly ever speak to each other since each one has his/her own business to attend to. My eldest sister is usually locked up in her room, sleeping or looking at her huge wardrobe and thinking what to wear the next day. My other sister is in college and she's a buddy of her own. My brother spends most of his time playing computer games and ranting away in his near. I mean, seriously, his room is so stinky and disgusting, you would think, if you walked in, you are in a compost pit. I, on the other hand, am usually in the living room watching television, sometimes for ten hours straight.

On those rare occasions when the electricity is out, we actually get around to talking. My mother would then tell us that one of her four bundles of joy, I was the navel, the geeky one, if I may, while the tomboy-in-one was (and still is) Raya Jr.

Even as infants, our differences were apparent. I stopped drinking milk from a feeding bottle when I was 2, like all other kids should. But at the age of 7, when mom kids would prefer to drink from a drinking glass, Raya Jr. still cuddled from a synthetic nipple. At the tender age of 4, I was already a book enthusiast, reading through book pages like a scholar might review a report. At the age of 5, Raya Jr. was undoubtedly illiterate in reading. She is a "people" person. I, on the other hand, am happier this in a solitary-like fog while staring at it. Though I never got to see him do it, just thinking of it made me feel sorry for the fly and terrified for my brother.

As we grew up, our relationship turned from bad to worse. He tricks me whenever he finds the opportunity, and sometimes he beats me up when I refuse to be tricked.

One time, he threw a dipper bowl in my stomach after I told him he looked like a giraffe. At that instant, I thought I was going to spit blood. I was so angry, but what could I do? I was small and weak; he was big and strong.

Easter revenge came in the form of my sister. She was so mad at him for burning my hair (the second time) and locking him with the same dipper and bit his arm. Can you believe it? She actually bit his arm! I will never forget that day.

I think Raya Jr. got shaken by that experience, and that is why he never ever dared to touch me again. Instead, he'd bully to around, that is. But when we are alone, it's a whole different story. He is my best friend. I mean, I would have no love to give unless like he's willing. He can't even buy his own soft drink from the store right across the street, he has to order me to buy one for him. When I tell him to buy his own, he'd get angry and say "Stop (small vulgar) me!"

Raya Jr. is the biggest bum I know. He is so lazy he doesn't even watch TV because he says it's boring. And he doesn't get what he wants, he hits me at the back of my head like some suddenly-headed clubhouse was. Sometimes, he would position in front of a big scary dog and when I start shaking and screaming (yes, I'm afraid of dogs), he'd laugh maniacally and say, "Pretty soon tokya ko." How evil, brilliant.

That said, he is my biggest fan. He is also a pervert. He drags me whenever I have my hair turned like when I am washing the dishes or when I wipe the table after we eat. He is a sadomasochist.

Physique, my childhood arch enemy, is answering and truces. She used to tease me and bullymob me among all my friends. She used to call me names, and I would call her names and write my name—which got me sent to the principal's office. But compared to Raya Jr., she is an angel.

I will never forget the time when Heidi and I went to a friend's party. She left early and I stayed behind. At around 8 in the evening, I went home and received a slap slap on my face from my mom. Apparently, Heidi told her that I was having some late romance. I was still flirting with some guy. I loathed her so much I wanted to gouge her eyes out. But next to Raya Jr., Heidi is a good-natured goddess.

Nobody can beat him at the top of my Most Loathed list.

But recently as I went over my old stuff, I found many old photos and came to realize just how much I've changed. One picture shows I had a childish fear of Santa Claus. But more importantly, I found many pictures of my brother and me together, and I couldn't believe my eyes.

It seems that we used to get along fine. We even have a photo where I am wearing a red dress and we are dancing like lesbians (I'm kidding, Mother Immaculate, I swear). I wish I could go back to the time when what I felt whenever I was with him was happiness, not hatred or loathing. I want to return to those old times when I didn't feel hugging my brother disgusting. Now, I cannot even remember how it felt because I don't want to even think of hugging him, since I might puke.

That I recognize that the hatred I feel is not directed at him but at me and the person I have become. I no longer have a sense of family, brotherly, I have alienated myself from my own brother and the rest of the gang. I don't know what went wrong—I'm not a psychologist. But, the fact that my brother and I need not to bother all day long probably means something.

I hate him because he's not doing anything to control his temper. I hate him because he ignores his own filth. I hate him because he thinks like nothing. I have ever smelled before.

But as much as I hate to admit it, I hate him because I love him, and I don't want him to end up a miserable old brat. I know it's a complicated feeling. You know that saying, "The more you hate, the more you love"? I agree.

Ayesah S. Tecson, 18, is a 2nd year Bachelor of Arts in Language and Literature student at the University of the Philippines, Diliman. This is her first published piece. She brother is now married and she says he is not much of a jerk anymore.

Notice to Youngblood contributors:

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The gift of quality education

GOOD MORNING LOTS. GOOD MORNING—I FEEL VERY big my honoration to join the Basic Education Stakeholders Forum, the first of its kind in Sorsogon. With me were Basilan Apuyan, president of the Association for Worldwide People Power (AWPPOW) and Dr. Eva Mojillion, the national coordinator of PWPPP's very popular Honoring the Masses Program.

Dr. Ricky Recio Nolasco, PWPPP's adviser on Multi-Lingual Education got the ball rolling several weeks back by inviting up with Councilor Daniel Lee, Sorsogon City Schools Division Superintendent Milo Bella to, with, Mitch and Daniel set up an exploratory meeting with Mrs. Lorna Figueroa, Mayor Leovic Dimodica's city administrator and con, Vally Lee.

Ruby, Daniel and PWPPP executive director Rosalie Bella worked on their behalf while the stakeholders' forum on education like Dr. Hegina Alden and Dr. Millie Espina and Sorsogon City Schools Division superintendent Virgilio Real.

The Basic Education Stakeholders Forum in Sorsogon is the PWPPP's latest effort to organize communities for both education and school reform, using insights gained from the People Power experience. Below an excerpt from my keynote address:

What is People Power?

From today, many of us do not see the difference between mass actions like demonstrations and mass peaceful and genuine People Power. This is understandable because the most spectacular feature of People Power in 1986 was when more than a million of us stood our ground in front of Camp Aguinaldo and Camp Crame for four days, forcing the Marcos dictatorship to surrender to the power of the collective will and unwavering faith to God.

Commentary

Eugenia Duran Apostol

Sadly, as time went by, People Power was trivialized. Self-styled leaders deceitfully subverted and manipulated popular will, ironically, so that they could perpetuate themselves in power. People Power was never meant to be used for that. People Power is for the common good, not for just a few.

The real gift of People Power is the First Basic Education Stakeholders Forum right here in the City of Sorsogon. You may not realize it but you practically are the observed example of People Power in its finest, purest.

Third, first of all we get together because we know that education is the best weapon against poverty. This is very important for us here in Sorsogon because our province is fisted in the hand fishers, agenda as a priority area. Therefore, access to quality education for our youth is the key to appropriate action.

However, the crisis that Philippine education faces today is so more than too many children and so, alas, for an enormous some of them: teacher quality, the language of instruction, the child-friendliness of the school, adequate textbooks and worthwhile curriculum.

The point is through this forum, you—the stakeholders—can have the opportunity to really say out loud what aspect of the education crisis affects you most. You can then share with the rest of us what you think can be done about it. This I believe is the best way to get a more informed appreciation of the problems that our schools, our students and our teachers face here in Sorsogon.

Throughout the day, you'll get to hear and see what other people—who are just like you—have done to uplift the quality of education in their own communities, city or municipalities. The insight that they will share with us will help us see the connections with clarity.

We'll talk about things like head-education of learners and the 5773 classroom. We'll look into programs that challenge teachers to do better, like Search for Outstanding Teachers. We'll even grow. I'm sure we'll have animated discussions on the benefits of multilingual instruction. (and last certainly not the least, together we can hopefully outwit the monsters we now have and plan on how to come more to contain the programs and projects that will energize these out-groups there-selves. The aim of this exercise is for us to have a clear idea of what we are facing. This way we can come up with workable approaches and lasting solutions to the education issues that our beloved Sorsogon has been struggling to address all these years. In short, together we can discover ways to make our dream for a better Sorsogon come true.

By being a part of this gathering, you are not thinking about yourself or what you'll get out of this event. Just by turning to the person beside you, you know that you are not alone. I am sure all of you came because deep inside, you all want to help give the children of Sorsogon the gift of quality education. The enthusiasm that you've shown by coming here is the true essence of People Power.

* * *

Eugenia Duran Apostol is the founding chair of the Sorsogon Chapter of Worldwide People Power.

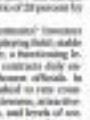
The 2010 imperatives

LIKE MANY FILIPINOS, I HOPE THAT THE RALLying global economic crisis will leave us relatively unscathed. The latest official statistics say that our economy is still growing at the rate of about 3-4 percent per year. Yet I have this nagging concern that our economy is not producing the jobs needed to allow Filipinos to cope with the crisis, get out of poverty and attain better lives.

What are the prospects for jobs in our country today? The official NSO statistics say that unemployment is consistently over 20 percent, using baseline in 40/2006 to no consistently 17 percent, which means that out of a labor force of about 40 million, 11 million were unemployed! The NSO numbers probably include those who are officially only "underemployed", but no matter how you cut it, the situation is dismal. Add to these the 9-10 million Filipinos working overseas and we have a situation where a huge number of Filipinos unable to find satisfactory work in their own country!

The plain reality then is that our economy is not generating the jobs needed to enable millions of Filipinos to live decent lives. And the primary reason for this is that we are not attracting the investments needed to produce these jobs.

Business Matters



Ramon R. del Rosario Jr.

One of the key indicators of that is the ratio between investments and GDP. Economists look for a ratio in the range of 23-25 percent for adequate job creation. The ASEAN report of August 2008 shows the Philippine investment ratio for 2007 at 15.5, which remains very substantially against Vietnam's 41.7, Thailand's 26.8, Singapore's 22.8, Malaysia's 21.9, and Indonesia's 24.9.

A closer scrutiny of the Philippine record is quite revealing. In the final years of President Fidel Ramos, 1995 to 1997, the Philippine investment ratio averaged 24.0. In the Gloria years, from 1998 to 2000, under President Joseph Estrada, the ratio were 20.8, 21.2 and 19.8. From 2001 to 2007, under President Macapagal-Arroyo, the ratios dropped consistently from 17.7 to 14.5 in 2006 then to 15.3 in 2007. The current six (not Noda Ono) reports a ratio of 20 percent by 2010.

Why the low level of investments? Investors seek clean governance, a level playing field, stable laws, regulations, and policies, a functioning legal and judicial system, with contracts duly enforced, and competent and honest officials. In surveys where investors are asked to rate countries in terms of their competitiveness, attractiveness as a place to do business, and levels of corruption, the Philippines does very poorly, especially in survey after survey on corruption, where we have recently risen to the top of the lists of the most corrupt countries in Asia or even the world!

Poor governance leads to a low level of investments which leads to low jobs, leading to poverty. And so, if we are to create more jobs to give more Filipinos a chance at a better life, we have to address the issue of governance. In our system of government, power is very much centralized in the office of the President, and the issue of governance ultimately rests on the President's shoulders.

The record of this current administration is dismal when it comes to things that matter to investors. Regulations and policies have no stability and are subjected to cater to friends or to political expediency. Corruption is not only ignored, it is encouraged and rewarded, especially as it leads to benefit the highest government officials and their families. The justice system is seriously flawed and the worst criminals go unpunished.

Fortunately, we have the elections of 2010 to look forward to. We must believe that the elections will be held as scheduled, a golden opportunity for the fresh start that we desperately seek. We must and affect the forces of apathy and cynicism to lead us to believe that there is nothing we can do to effect the change we need.

To achieve this change, there are three imperatives.

One. The first is that we must have the 2010 presidential elections. In the face of formidable forces that are determined to deprive us of that right so that they can perpetuate themselves in power, we must be passionately determined to do all it takes to have elections. That is the 2010 challenge. We are ready to face any challenge. If it means fighting it out in the courts or again mobilizing tens of thousands in the streets, so be it. We absolutely need and deserve a fresh start.

The second imperative is to select the candidates for elective office who have the track record, the competence, the character, and most of all, the leadership to inspire our nation to the progressive future that we all deserve, spurred by increased investments and jobs, but we cannot stop at making our theater and hoping for victory—we must work for the victory of our candidates. Only a united, active and committed citizenship is absolutely essential if change is to be achieved.

And, of course, the final imperative is that the elections be clean and credible, where the will of the people is clearly manifested in the final results.

All these must come to pass if we are to have hope for a brighter future. It must all begin with having the 2010 elections. It is time to push up the pieces, put behind us our last decade with its utterly uninspiring, morally bankrupt leadership, and start again more forward.

* * *

Mr. Del Rosario is the president and CEO of Philex. E-mail: mail@philexmine.com.ph

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BNPP proposal would prove graft has its way of surviving

THE LATEST MOVE TO REVIVE THE MOTHBALLED Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) shows environmentalists, nationalistic activists, concerned individuals, faith-based communities and organizations. It may be recalled that the BNPP was mothballed soon after it was completed in 1986. The plant was declared unsafe after about 40,000 defects were found in its design and in the manner it was constructed, and after its preferred location was proven to be earthquake-prone. But, the location itself poses a great risk to the plant which, if damaged, could pose to us a greater danger to its surrounding communities (and environment). What is most disturbing about all this is that the high cost of owning the BNPP fed the Filipino people dry of much needed cash.

Let's refresh our memories: in the 1970s, Herminio Disini, a golf buddy of Ferdinand Marcos, allegedly used his connections with the dictator to ensure that the BNPP contract was awarded to the US firm Westinghouse Electric Corp. and Burns and Roe.

The BNPP became a "white elephant." Begun in 1976, its construction was completed in 1984 only. The original construction cost was $500 million. Its actual cost is estimated to be $2.3 billion.

When Marcos was toppled in 1986, President Corazon Aquino decided not to operate the plant, but she chose to pay the loan with people's money. Her successors did the same. The payment of the debt, including interests, was completed in 2007.

The treacherous effort to revive the BNPP is being spearheaded by Rep. Mark Cojuangco (son of businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco), and Rep. Jose Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo (son of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo).

Would anyone find it difficult to doubt the intention of the people behind the proposal to revive the BNPP? History does not repeat itself, but sometimes has a way of surviving.

Activists, environmentalists, nationalist activists, faith-based communities and individuals can only keep up their resistance against the BNPP's revival. We say, "Never again!" We cannot leave the solution of our energy problem in the hands of people [who] only see their lack of credibility, on the one hand, and [a] tremendous greed, on the other. Our country is rich in natural resources and we have never lacked in nationalist and people-oriented scientists who can solve the energy problem.

Let's not allow a repeat of the plunder perpetrated through the BNPP. Let's not give the corrupt and the greedy powers that be another chance to defraud more from the people.

—ROBERTO B. ROLLADA,
general secretary,
Kapatirang Gimbalunan Para sa Kayan
(Kaisahan), kaisahan@yahoo.com.ph

Too trusting, or too eager for personal glory?

I GOT WIND OF THE NEWS ABOUT SEN. Richard Gordon's statement regarding the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) kidnapping incident in Jolo through various media outlets—TV cable and newspapers. As a retired Army officer, I can't help but comment on how I see the situation and the way it is being handled by different personalities and elements of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police.

Having been assigned in Mindanao for most of my military career, I can say with complete confidence that the situations on the ground is again being misapprehended. We have been in this kind of situation even before I left the service—involvement of the Church, politicians or some self-appointed civic superheroes who were not of much help but instead just worsened the situation.

I don't have a problem with people trying to help secure the safe release of kidnap victims, but the negotiations should be premised on the overall picture of the situation, and this includes the personality profile of kidnappers, the terrain they operate in, their capabilities, etc. I mentioned these because these are the very factors that were disregarded during the Ugnayan kidnapping which led to the beheading of an American, Guillermo Sobrero. People who wanted to "help" forgot that the idea beyond kindlin fuses the proponents to fall prey while observing tenents aimed to strengthen their people to future atrocities.

It is saddening to know that my most admired senator has unwittingly become the idea beyond spokesperson. Senator Gordon may have the power of intentions—that is, to save the kidnapped victims, but his basis is off for the pullout of the ground troops surrounding the kidnappers is unwise. Once he really believes that Abinder Janjalani will engage in fair negotiations in the good senator can remaining or just too eager to secure the release of the ICRC victims for his personal glory?

Another question, did he ever think that what he is doing contributes to the demoralization of the operating troops? Soldiers always feel bad when they are being lambasted or limited for every flaws that happens on the ground. We feel bad when our officers and senators are not being recognized.

With Senator Gordon's actions the soldiers will lose the motivation to fight or do what they are expected to perform. Because of this, we will have in the future an AFP with a resigned-see attitude.

—COL. FELICISIMO C. SERAFFI (RET.),
felagcruz@yahoo.com

Statement attests Mancao guilty as mastermind

CEZAR MANCAO'S SWORN STATEMENT, which was published in the Inquirer on March 20, is nothing but the ex-cop's self-serving attempt to extricate himself from his direct involvement in the brutal slaying of Bubby Dacer and Emmanuel Corbito.

Reading the affidavit, one inevitably gets the impression that the affiant is gradually being cleared of the main responsibility for (instead, reminding) the crime. Hence Mancao's projection of himself as somebody who is righteous: "I still maintained my stern ... to bring to my attention orders regarding special operations not directly coming from me and not to be kept in performing operations outside of the PNCITF mandate, especially illegal ones."

Another example: "I was constrained to request for SAJ Air transfer to a regular PNP unit. Lacson, however, refused to grant my request."

My verdict: It may be true that the people Mancao has identified as behind the double murder may be all guilty, but he was part of the conspiracy to murder Dacer and is just as guilty. He is not qualified to be a state witness as he is not the least guilty.

—ERICK C. ALEJO,
119 Palo Drive, Bahaghi, Davao City

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INQUIRER Visayas

Memoir seeks atonement for atrocities

By Hector P. Bargas Jr.
Iloilo City

THE 93-YEAR-OLD JAPANese former combat officer, Toshiaki Kumai, steps on Ilonggo soil for the first time at the Iloilo airport on Wednesday.

It was the fifth time he returned to the province since 1945 but the visit was still accompanied by a flood of conflicting emotions.

Sixty-four years ago, as a prisoner of war in the Americas, Kumai left Iloilo citizens in a daze as residents including students watched in awe and terror as the regiment he commanded was assembled and marched to the waiting ships that would take them to Negros.

This time, he was warmly welcomed by Filipino and Japanese well-wishers who presented to him an English translation of his book that he wrote 22 years ago.

The publication of the 150-page book, "The Blood and Mud in the Philippines: An Ill Guerrilla Warfare on Panay Island" is a literary coup in the Kumai.

It is the first English translation of his account of the three-year stint as a captain and adjutant of the Japanese Army Garrison on Panay Island.

Based on the original publication in Japanese published in Tokyo in 1977, the book was translated by Satoshi Ishii and edited by Ma. Luisa Maliwanag, former dean of the University of the Philippines (UP) in the Visayas, and Ricardo Jose, professor at the UP in Diliman.

"I want to tell the present and future generations what happened and to give them a complete picture of the war by presenting the point of view of Japanese soldiers confronted there," Kumai told in an interview through an interpreter.

The book, which will be launched today in a recreation of the war in Panay from Dec. 18, 1941, Kumai's deployment to the island on Oct. 12, 1942 until the surrender of Japanese forces on the island in September 1945, and his imprisonment.

The book contains photographs of the Japanese invasion and occupation, maps, illustrations and sketches.

Kumai said he wrote the Japanese edition of the book to help provide answers to the kin of soldiers and civilians who died or who remained missing in Panay.

"I have to fill in this book pending for the comfort of my comrades, the "heiis" (Japanese soldiers in exile), the guerrillas and local residents who perished in the war, and the desire that such a deplorable war would never occur again," said Kumai in the prologue of the 1977 edition.

Mass suicide

Writing the book was also triggered by inquiries from relatives of 40 Japanese civilian residents who committed mass suicide ("shudan jiketsu") on March 21, 1945 while evading Filipino guerrillas and American troops.

In his earlier trips to Iloilo, Kumai located the site of the mass suicide in Sitio Suyac in Barangay Tigbauan in Mandurriao. Also, he met with the help of Japanese-Filipino residents and local authorities.

The book offers a yearly known account of the incident based on testimonies of survivors and residents in the area. It gives a broader detail of the retreat of Japanese soldiers and civilians from Iloilo City on March 18, 1945 after the landing of American forces on the southern shores of the city unopposed by Filipino guerrillas.

The civilians were part of the contingent of troops and residents who broke through the encirclement of American troops and guerrillas after a fierce battle and were scrounging to the mountains in Bucari in Leon town south of Iloilo City.

Hungry, tired and leading troops who were ill-numbering and evading guerrillas, the group composed mostly of the elderly, women and children took their own lives so as not to burden the retreating soldiers.

"They sang their farewell song in unison... "Gaui Sakabe (If I die to free)"....and bowed in the direction of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo and then took out swords and hand grenades. Trailing to kill themselves, some mothers in agony sought the help of passing stragglers and wounded (Japanese) soldiers who used bayonets or hand grenades (on them)," wrote Kumai.

The tragedy was widely reported in Japan but when retired Kumai went was that the children survived the incidents and were subsequently saved and raised by the local folk.

In 1993, Kumai visited Iloilo to put up a monument at the site of the tragedy with the help of Filipino-Japanese associations.

But Kumai had wanted his book translated in English so that it could be read by a broader audience, especially the residents of Panay Island.

It also offers atonement for the past.

"The Japanese soldiers will never invade the land of Panay again. I pray that this book will become one of the precious records of Panay that I love so much," Kumai told in the interview.

Extensive research

Maliwanag, who had done extensive research on pre-war residents of Japanese ancestry in Panay, said Kumai was intent on publishing his book in English in the island that he supported a serialized publication of his work in community newspapers two years ago.

With funding support from the Tokyo-based Japan-Philippines Volunteer Association (JPVA), an initial 500 copies of the book were finally published this year by a printing press in Iloilo City. The JPVA headed by Masataka Aiba also funded Kumai's trip.

Maliwanag said the remastered edition is intended to provide a deeper and fair-and understanding of the war that many learned only from sources and references that generally carried the point of view of the Americans and guerrillas.

Kumai is quick to point out that he does not want to offer judgment on the events and the actions of those involved in the war.

"I do not want to inject my own sentiments and views. It's up to the readers to judge what happened," he said.

The last two of the 11 chapters of the book deals with Kumai's capture after the remaining Japanese soldiers in Panay surrendered in September 1945.

He remembers the day they surrendered and were taken on a detention camp where accidents threw stones at them and shouted "Sakazae (shame)" and "Bonbo (bad)" at them.

But Boro failed to dampen his affection for the city as shown in his account when they boarded a ship en route to their transfer to a detention camp in Leyte on Sept. 15, 1945.

"Although the citizens cursed us and threw us many vile things, I could never forget Iloilo as soldiers and both and my affection for the city. I stood on deck until the lights of Iloilo were no longer visible. Thus, I said goodbye to the war-beat and Iloilo forever."

In the book, he also recounted his detention at a camp in Catubabog in Laguna where he was tried and convicted as a war criminal. Seven of his fellow soldiers were sentenced to death while others were meted life sentences or long prison terms like him.

A military court sentenced Kumai to imprisonment for 20 years based on the three separate incidents involving the death of four civilians and the torture of another.

He denied in his book that he was personally involved in the incidents or that he ordered those responsible for them.

But he does not feel bitterness over his imprisonment despite his denial of the charges that he committed war crimes. "I am innocent but I had to choose...It was difficult doing construction work as a prisoner, as that I have already accepted it," said Kumai who served his sentence in Sugamo prison in Tokyo for more than eight years from January 15, 1947 until he was release on parole on Feb. 10, 1954.

In his six-day trip, Kumai also met with friends and visited places where he stayed during the war.

He will also inaugurate today the Peace Memorial Museum at the office of the Iloilo Nikkei Jin Kai (association of Filipino-Japanese descendants) in Jaro District.

Asked if he had regrets on his involvement in the war, Kumai said he has already accepted that what happened in time was his destiny.

"It was a time of war. If it were not so, things would have been different for me," he said.

Despite his age, Kumai intends to continue coming back to Panay Island.

"I'm fortunate that I survived the war and until now," he said.

PANAY, Japanese Army officer Toshiaki Kumai points to an air raid shelter at the Locsin family compound on Ore. Luna Street where he and other Japanese Army officers were on March 18, 1945 to plan their evacuation and retreat from Iloilo City

'The Japanese soldiers will never invade the land of Panay again. I pray that this book will become one of the precious records of Panay that I love so much..."

ILONGGO reading Japanese version of his newly published book.

INVITATION TO INTERESTED INVESTORS AND CONTRACTORS

The Municipality of General Tinio (Papaya) Nueva Ecija invites qualified investors to undertake the construction of the Balintingon Reservoir Multi-Purpose (BRMP) located at Barangay Pias and Rio Chico as defined into the following phases:

Phase I	Construction of access road from the town proper of General Tinio (Papaya) to Balintingon Reservoir Multi-Purpose Project.	Php 2B
Phase II	Clearing and preparation of the assigned 2,800 hectares of the Balintingon Reservoir Multi-Purpose Project.	Php 2B
Phase III	Construction of Balintingon Reservoir Multi-Purpose Project (BRMP) Dam Proper.	Php 5B
Phase IV	Installation of Power Plant Component.	Php 5B
Phase V	Construction of Canal and Water Ways.	Php 5B
Phase VI	Systems Interconnection to Metro Manila water needs of MWSS, Maynilad and/or Manila Water	

Minimum investment amount for six (6) phases - Twenty Five Billion Pesos (Php 25B)

Note: Phase IV and Phase VI has no Feasibility Study yet. OPTIONAL.

For inquiries, interested party may contact the Office of the Mayor, Office of the Municipal Administrator at Tel. No. (044) 973-0279, Telefax: (044) 973-0278, Office of the Vice Mayor and Sangguniang Bayan at Telefax No. (044) 973-0349 for details and other concerns.

Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Burgonia

Uproar continues vs power rate hike

Visayas execs wage war on Napocor, PSALM petition for 47% increase

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—THE UPROAR OVER A planned 47-percent increase in power rates in the Visayas continued despite a government move to lower a provisional rate increase while awaiting a final ruling on the higher rates.

The Energy Regulatory Commission earlier ordered a provisional power rate increase leading to the 47-percent hike by 10 centavos.

Even if the provisional power rate increase was reduced from the original P1.34 per kilowatt hour, the additional 83 centavos per kWh that consumers would have to pay is still a big amount, said Sen. Mar Roxas, a Capiznon.

Thanks, but...

Bacolod Mayor Evelio Leonardia said that while Negros officials are thankful for the ERC decision to study the increase it had earlier granted to the National Power Corp. (Napocor), they would press for a bigger reduction.

"The 10.04 centavos reduction is good, but it is not the end game, because 83 centavos will still hurt the public," Leonardia said.

Negros Occidental Gov. Isidro Zayco said he would call for a joint session.

"We feel that no increase at all should be implemented now because it is very untimely amid the economic meltdown," Zayco said.

Partial victory

A power rate increase at this time would hurt households and businesses already struggling to survive and drive away investors in the Visayas, he added.

Lawyer Jerman Ortiz, the legal counsel of the provincial government, described the ERC's decision as "partial victory" but, he said, officials would still fight to stop any increase.

The ERC climbed on Wednesday the provisional power rate increase it authorized the Napocor to impose in the Visayas grid from P1.1400 per kWh to P1.33 centavos.

The new order means that Napocor's power rate charge of P4.3309 per kWh will be brought down to P3.7223 per kWh.

The ERC hearing on the petition of Napocor and the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) to increase its generation charge in the Visayas by P1.34 per kWh would also still continue as scheduled on April 21 in Cebu City.

Ortiz said thousands of consumers in the Central Negros Electric Cooperative (Ceneco) coverage area have already signed the manifesto opposing the rate hike.

Ozamiz said the Northern Negros Electric Cooperative Dumaguete have filed separate petitions to oppose the rate increase at the ERC hearings in Cebu last week.

Ortiz said he has also secured a mandate in Zayco that officials pursue the filing of a petition at the Court of Appeals to stop Napocor from enforcing the provisional increase pending resolution of the ERC hearings.

Roxas said he supports the bid to go to court to ask for a temporary restraining order on the power rate hike.

Roxas last earlier filed a resolution seeking for a Senate inquiry into the power rate increase.

Officials of ERC, Napocor and PSALM have all been asked to submit documents to justify the increase.

Roxas has also asked the Joint Congressional Power Committee to look into the matter.

SOLITUDE
PHOTO BY JOAN BONDOC FOR INQUIRER
A fisherman waits in boat off his catch as sunset hides the silhouettes he faced as a lot and hoard day on Canapan, Masbate. Fishing is the main livelihood in the town but catches declining because of various reasons, including climate change.

Passport applications up in E. Visayas

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—DESPITE A economic gripping many countries in this world, residents of Eastern Visayas continue to opt for foreign jobs as shown by the number of applicants for passports, the Regional Consular Office of the Department of Foreign Affairs in Eastern Visayas said.

Assistant Director Lourdes Ambrosio, acting assistant of the Regional Consular Office, said her office received 1,924 applications for passports in January and another 2,100 in February.

More than 80 percent of the applicants cited employment abroad as the reason for securing passports, Ambrosio said on Wednesday.

"Based on our interviews with the applicants, they were applying for passports so that their could reach abroad. There are not much job opportunities in the country, nowadays so they are seeking employment outside the country," she said.

One of the passport applicants, 40-year-old "Tarcio," who declined to give his full name, said their family had decided to leave for Saudi, he had an option but to try his luck in Saudi Arabia.

"Nowadays, it's better for us all to be realistic and stop being emotional to order for us to survive. Of course, I will miss my wife and children but they know the reason why I have to leave them," he said.

'Calamay' makers play key role in Candon feast

AURORA SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY
(ASEZA)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY

PROJECT TITLE / LOCATION	REFERENCE NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT	SOURCE OF FUND	DURATION (CALENDAR DAYS)
Procurement of ...	[illegible]	[illegible]	P [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
			P [illegible]		
			P [illegible]		

ACTIVITY	DATE AND TIME	VENUE
PRE-BID CONFERENCE	April 7, 2009, 9:00 AM	2nd Floor, ASEZA Bldg., Zabali-Ditinan, Baler
SUBMISSION OF PRE-QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS	April 10, 2009, 9:00 AM	2nd Floor, ASEZA Bldg., Zabali-Ditinan, Baler
OPENING OF PRE-QUALIFICATION	April 10, 2009, 9:00 AM	2nd Floor, ASEZA Bldg., Zabali-Ditinan, Baler

(ATTY. EMILY C. NIÑO)
BAC Chairman

By Lennox Kudias Jr.
Inquirer Northern Luzon

HOMETOWN *Snapshots*

GANDON CITY—
This Ilocos Sur city's favorite delicacy, "calamay" (glutinous rice cake), has become a major attraction during the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and as a thanksgiving offering during the city's fiesta celebration.

Fr. Vicente Avila, Candon parish priest, gathered calamay makers to create a rosary using the native delicacy.

The calamay rosary, from the Latin Bugat: produced 59 calamay, glazed hard cocoa shells, to match the number of beads in a rosary.

Avila said the activity was meant to highlight Candon's most famous product since it is celebrated in 111th founding anniversary.

The "calamay rosary" was displayed at the yard of the St. John Antiques Church from where members of the parish youth ministry and choir led the 30-minute recitation of the Holy Rosary.

The rosary was later taken in a procession where Avila celebrated Mass.

"We are very happy because our product was used [in this activity]. There is also our way of thanking the Lord," said Lina Abaya, president of the Candon City Calamay Vendors.

The calamay rosary were later given to church-goers.

MAKERS of "calamay" (glutinous rice cake), form a rosary outside the St. John Antiques Church in Candon City, Ilocos Sur to celebrate the feast of Candon and the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin.

Gov asks Army to dismantle gov't militias

IRIGA CITY—THE CHAIR OF THE PEACE and order council in Southern Mindanao asked the military to dismantle vigilante militia that are being trained for human rights violations in the region.

Davao del Sur Gov. Douglas Cagas, councils chair, said citizens are being are lured to the Barangay Defense System (BDS), a militia that the military formed to counter the entry or movement of communist guerrillas in the villages.

Cagas said the existence of the BDS might even be illegal.

In a letter sent to the local Army commander here, Cagas, one of the prime movers of the defunct Bagkalipunan Kamayahan ning sa Kabsaan, a 1980s anti-communist group, said the military should cite the legal basis for organizing the BDS before he agrees to it.

But even at Lt. Col. Lauther Medina, commander of the 29th Infantry Battalion, could explain, Cagas, a lawyer, already asked the Commission on Human Rights to investigate the encirclement of villagers in BDS members.

In Abu Gnal town alone, the military said it has successfully organized 19 BDS units already.

"The rights of the civilians might have been violated already," said Cagas, citing reports of forcible recruitment into the BDS.

Cagas reminded the military not to put civilians at risk by putting them in the front line of the battle against communist guerrillas.

Peneza said he found nothing wrong in the BDS and that he will request Cagas to also sending him a letter of explanation.

He also denied the militias was forcing civilians to become BDS members.

In Davao City, the Sangguniang Panlungsod also asked the military not to forcibly recruit civilians into the BDS.

"The civilians do not willfully intend to be members of the BDS..., " said a council resolution passed earlier that was made public only recently. —Jeffrey Tupas and Orlando Dacoy, Inquirer Mindanao

For earth's sake: Turn off lights 8:30-9:30 p.m.

From page A1

around 18 percent of the estimated 4,000 cities and towns worldwide participating in Earth Hour.

Earth Hour is a global effort which involves the voluntary shutting down of electricity in homes, offices, public places and commercial establishments for one hour to raise awareness about the effects of climate change and global warming.

For this year's Earth Hour, the target in the Philippines was to reach 10 million people, 300 corporations and 100 cities to turn off their lights for an hour tonight.

Last year's savings

Last year, more than 1 million Filipinos, 400 establishments and 50 cities participated in the activity—resulting in a reduction of 36 megawatts (MW) to power consumption in the Luzon grid, according to data from the Philippine Electricity Market Corp., the operator of the nationwide electricity spot market.

During last year's Earth Hour, the actual consumption in Metro Manila between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. fell 2,875 MW, falling short of the projected demand of 3,193 MW.

In the Luzon grid, actual consumption was just 5,644 MW, 36 MW lower than the projected 5,786 MW demand.

The maximum demand drop of around 39 MW was reproduced at 9:14 p.m. in Metro Manila and of around 116 MW at 8:34 p.m. to the Luzon grid.

With more individuals and groups expected to participate in this year's activity, consumption from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. should drop more significantly than last year's.

Biggest action for Earth

Earth and Earth Hour would be the biggest environmental action ever staged in the country, "but, this time, local power savings amounted to 88 MW with 36 MW saved in Luzon alone, which is equivalent to shutting down a coal-fired power plant for one hour."

"This year I we are hoping for savings amounting to 500 MW," he said.

Gregg Yan, WWF-Philippines information and communication officer, told the Inquirer that local cities and towns participating in Earth Hour would span from the province of Cagayan in the north to Jolo and Tawi-Tawi in the south in equivalent to some 10 million Filipinos.

During Earth Hour, lights will dim on main streets along Ayala Avenue, Roxas Boulevard, Shaw and Marsilla would be switched off. Lights would also go out in other main thoroughfares, bridges and plazas.

Makati, Taguig, Pasig

Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay yesterday said more than 18 companies, led by the Ayala Foundation Inc., would join the global event by switching off the lights in their offices from 8:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. today.

He said streetlights in 27 wards in the city, as well as lights in all public buildings, would be turned off during the one-hour event.

Binay also said a 7 p.m. prayer service will be held at the Ayala Triangle Gardens.

Taguig Mayor Sigfrido Tinga said he would lead the switching off of lights in the city hall and other government offices, as well as in public schools, parks, churches, bridges and plazas.

Pasig Mayor Vicente Eusebio said he would lead the switching off of lights in the city hall and other government offices, as well as in public schools, parks, churches, bridges and plazas.

Malacañang participation

Malacañang said President Arroyo would lead the switching off of lights in the Palace and other government offices.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Arroyo would switch off the lights in the Palace at 8:30 p.m. and switch them back on at 9:30 p.m.

Ermita said Arroyo would also encourage Filipinos to participate in the activity.

Police deployment

Interior Undersecretary Austere Panadero this week issued a memorandum to all provincial governors, city and town mayors and barangay chiefs to implement a lights-out from 8:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. today as their contribution to Earth Hour.

"The simple act and small sacrifice of switching off our lights during Earth Hour will certainly generate enormous results in the form of climate change," said Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno in a statement.

The National Capital Region Police Office assured metropolitan residents that the police would continue to be on guard during the hour-long lights-out campaign as it cautioned that "events involving criminal syndicate advantage of the situation."

"NCRPO policemen shall be carefully deployed to crime-prone areas, commercial centers and other places where criminal activities might be undertaken," said Metro Manila police chief Director Leopoldo Bataoil.

One billion worldwide

Around the globe, Earth Hour's focus and the target was on the participation of 1 billion people in around 80 countries.

"This will be the country's largest environmental movement ever."

In the Philippines, the main switch-off ceremony and live concert will be held at the SM Mall of Asia grounds in Pasay City and will be broadcast live on Studio 23. Local media outlets had confirmed their participation in the concert were Gary Valenciano and Lea Salonga. Other switch-off ceremonies will be observed in other parts of the country like Makati, Baguio, Cebu and Davao.

RP 1st Asean country to join

Earth Hour was launched in Australia on March 31, 2007, with more than two million people and 2,100 businesses in Sydney turning off their lights for 60 minutes.

In 2008, 50 million people in 370 cities participated with lights going out in New York's Times Square, Rome's Coliseum and even the remote Casey Station in Antarctica.

The Philippines was the first Southeast Asian nation to pledge support. With a report from Marlon Ramos

WHAT WENT BEFORE: Deadly games

IN OCTOBER 2002, THE DEPARTMENT of Justice filed murder charges against Supt. Rafael Castelo and four others for the killing of former Army Lt. Baron Corvemeo on Dec. 31, 2000.

Corvemeo, who described himself as a spokesperson and cofounder of the "Young Officers Union," was found slain in the head on Mabining Extent Road in Hinoba-an, San Felipe City.

He was first dropped from the rolls in 1999 for desertion of duty was reinstated in July 1998 and was dropped again in September 1999 for going on absence without leave.

Castelo was named by ex-Marine Sgt. Joseph Meonardo as the mastermind of Corvemeo' killing, after witnesses tagged Meonardo as the gunman.

Meonardo was arrested in May 2002.

But Castelo's name was hiding. By January 2003, the warrant for indefinite detention was unwarranted had reached P1 million.

Even when Meonardo and two other accomplices in the slay—Jaime Contreras and Rolando Torres—were sentenced in August 2004, Castelo was still at large.

Meonardo was sentenced to 20 to 40 years imprisonment. The others were given a sentence term of 14 years and a day.

In July 2008, Castelo was arrested in the Ortigas area, along with lawyer Homobono Adaza and former military officials Osvaldo Ilagan, Cesar dela Peña and Efrain Sadang.

They were later discharged by the DOJ with exception, courts and "proposed to commit coup d'etat" upon the complaint of lawyer Raymund Fortun, who accused them of trying to extort $1 million from his client Hidenori Inkanto to "fund a coup d'etat."

These charges were handed by a Quezon City regional trial court January.

Bobi Pedroso, Inquirer Research

Ex-cop exec gets life for Baron slay

From page A1

Castelo based on circumstantial evidence, including the confession of the convicted gunman, ex-Marine Sgt. Joseph Meonardo, that named him as the brains behind the murder.

Two other respondents in the case, Rolando Torres and Jaime Contreras, also pointed to Castelo as the mastermind.

Another convicted, Santiago Contreras, remains at large.

In handing down his decision, Manila's third-level Court's modern he had and denied no evidence.

The judge also ordered Castelo to pay Corvemeo' family widower P500,000 in civil and moral damages.

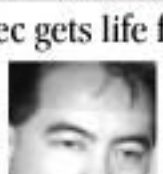
Castelo appointed calm as a member of the court staff read the verdict during the promulgation on Thursday, according to Corvemeo' brother, Nick Corvemeo.

'Picture of guilt'

In his 15-page decision, Marcelo said that while the court did not find direct evidence to prove Castelo's culpability to the murder, it found six sufficient circumstantial proofs to "disclose a picture of guilt."

He said these were:

- The manipulated orders issued that Meonardo, Contreras and Torres turned on May 31, 2000, linking Castelo to the killing;
- Castelo's being absent without leave from the Philippine National Police five days after he was reportedly informed of the killing;
- The testimonies of the three accused who claimed that another person had "used" them to implicate Castelo;
- The analysis that the testimonies were made to protect Castelo;



BARON

CARDINO

- Castelo's decision to hide from the law for six years;
- Castelo's failure to explain why he refused arrest.

"Perhaps, some pieces of the picture, taken individually, may not suffice to convict. This is precisely why the law on circumstantial evidence positively requires consideration of the collective whole," Marcelo said.

"In this court's opinion, the six enumerated circumstances may be compared to the pieces of a puzzle; these volume dealers of wisdom will depend not on the individual revelations or strengths of some pieces, but on the overall consistency of the whole mass," he said.

'Political complexion'

In his petition for bail, Castelo declared that he was not a flight risk because he had served for his life.

He added that the case was "tainted with political complexion."

Castelo also said he was already in talks with some senior government officials to facilitate his surrender but that his plan was aborted by his arrest on July 2, 2008.

He said his decision to surrender was prompted by the reconstruction of his conscience.

Manila, however, insisted that the decision of the government's prosecutor that the court found guilty of the crime, were obviously made to protect Castelo.

The judge said that while Meonardo retracted his statements, he did not appeal his conviction.

Manolo Hendon dismissed Meonardo' affect that he did not know Castelo: "It is difficult and treasured and contrary to human experience to implicate a complete stranger and give details with great particularity."

He argued that Castelo's decision to flee only bolstered the court's belief

Late SPORTS

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Hot to your hotfinch: ringtone text messages for managers (207 bytes, or 180 characters)

MARUJO Aquino (left) of Sta. Lucia tries to hook his way past Jet Lewis of Rain or Shine. MANNY MILAN

Realtors' defense brings Painters back to earth

By Rhaydz B. Barcelo

DEFENSE-MINDED STA. LUCIA KEPT A 3-0 point second-quarter lead before holding Rain or Shine's stunning rebound run in the Metrobility PBA Fiesta Cup.

Anthony Johnson scored 22 of his eight high 34 points in the second half and Norman Grandeo dropped shots even to power the Realtors to a 109-100 victory at the Cuneta Astrodome.

The win snapped the Elasto Painters' four-game streak from game-winning attack and gave the Realtors a 3-2 card like Rain or Shine, two games behind unbeaten league leader San Miguel going into the Holy Week break.

"I'll take that win any time," Sta. Lucia coach Bayani Fernando said. "I don't like my guys giving up a 24-point lead, but at least they came back. I'm looking forward to repeating our routines."

Sta. Lucia avoided another fourth-quarter meltdown later in the night, thanks to six straight points from Mac Cardenas that helped the Tropang Texters pound out a 124-122 win over Alaska in the second game.

Cardenas finished with 16 points, the final one coming inside the last 60 seconds, with his triple from the right corner with 13.3 ticks left sealing the Texters' third win against the seven losses.

The Aces took a second straight close shave and slumped to a 2-5 card.

The Realtors zoomed to a 49-21 lead in the second quarter when Grandeo came off the bench to deliver three of his five triples there.

And just when it looked like it would be a cruise for the Realtors the rest of the way, a rebuilding Rain or Shine rally that overhauled the Painters making a 57-56 lead with 6:10 left in the third before a Realtors timeout.

But the Realtors outbraked a 12-1 run capped by Grandeo's fourth triple, 88-81, before holding off a series of Rain or Shine counterbursts the rest of the way.

Johnson, Mamaril's second 12 of his team-high 27 points in the fourth period as he tried to ignite the Rain or Shine offense time and again but timely contributions from Johnson on both ends helped preserve the win.

Johnson, clearly that surely becoming the tournament opening segment, scored nine of his total in the fourth before sealing up with the defensive gem of the night, a block on Jet Lewis with 22 seconds left with Sta. Lucia protecting a 106-100 lead.

Lewis still finished with 23 points, but 19 of those came in the first half.

The scores:

STA. LUCIA (109)—Johnson 34, Grandeo 17, Yeptes 15, Aquino 15, Hrusch 7, Cortez 6, Mamaril 5, Milanes 5, Mendoza 5, Sicard 0.

RAIN OR SHINE (100)—Mercado 27, Lewis 23, Belencion 12, Torres 12, Reyes II, Rosenwald II, Sikuyang 4, Ong 3, Cruz, Lanete, Andaya 0, Ilo 0, Lanete 0.

Quarters: 32-20, 49-41, 77-68, 109-100.

Second Game

ALASKA (124)—Hrabak 26, Ebinger 17, Razon 17, Cardenas 16, Cruz 14, Jarque 10, Dela Cruz 9, Lanete 6, Capacio 5, Reyes 0.

RAIN OR SHINE (122)—Lewis 23, Torres 21, Belencion 19, Mercado 15, Reyes II 11, Rosenwald 11, Ong 7, Cruz 6, Sikuyang 5, Andaya 4, Ilo 0.

Quarters: 32-30, 59-52, 91-82, 124-122.

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NOKIA

Miñoza now 2nd after a 68

HILTON HEAD, SOUTH CAROLINA (AFP)—Jonathan Kaye stayed firmly on track to add the inaugural Block Mountain Masters after the second round on Friday, but Filipino legend Frankie Miñoza was not so fortunate.

Kaye carried a four-under par 68 for a two-day total of 12-under par 132 at Block Mountain Golf Club and entered the overnight lead for the inaugural $500,000 Asian Tour event.

The 40-year-old Miñoza continued to roll back the years and fired a 68 after an opening 67 for a share of second place on 135 along with Indonesian Rommy Bisa, who shot a 68.

Arjmar Mendoza remained the last best Filipino in the field scoring a 73 to join a four-way tie for 12th at 138.

Angelo Que was two strokes behind at 141 after a 73 while Antonio Lascuña stumbled on 12 for 145.

Jeremy Bokovoy is the first and three holes for a 67 and made the halfway cut of 144 along with Juvic Pagunsan, who had a 73.

Miñoza actually had a great scorer for the day with four holes left following two birdies and an eagle on the par-4 16th. But he bogeyed the 17th and 18th holes to lead Others to Rose.

"I was hitting it very good except for the last two holes. I think I was getting a bit tired," said Miñoza, who won twice in 2007 and plans to attend the Champions (Seniors) Tour Qualifying School in the US late this year.

Asian Tour News

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2 teachers, driver killed as car hits post, rams bus

By Marlon Ramos

THREE PEOPLE, TWO OF THEM GRADE SCHOOL teachers, died after the vehicle they were riding in slammed into a concrete post and collided with an oncoming bus on the northbound lane of the South Luzon Expressway (SLEx) in Taguig City yesterday.

Nanette Lirio, 38, his wife Severina, 58, and Aurelia Gaviana, 59, died on the spot from severe head and body injuries, according to Alvin Vidal, radio operator of the police Highway Patrol Group.

GHQ Ramon Pagado, case investigator, said Nicosia and Gaviana were faculty members of a public elementary school in Pasay City.

Vidal said the victims were coming along the outside lane of SLEx on board a Nissan Terrano (SGA 805) driven by Nicosia around 5:30 a.m. when it rammed into a concrete column near the C5 interchange and DBB C5 Bypass on Kilometer 12.

Also said the impact sent the vehicle turning three times before it collided head-on with the Hinkai-bound Eagle Star bus (TOE 545) driven by Alfredo Pecias.

Pagado said the victims had just come from their house in Upper Bicutan, Taguig.

Nanette, he said, was supposed to bring the two other victims to Fort Bonifacio where a bus was waiting for them. "The students were scheduled to attend a seminar in Baguio City," Pagado said.

He said it was still unclear how Nanette lost control of the vehicle, but suggested that the driver could have "fallen asleep."

Vidal said Pecias and a bus passenger, identified only as Jeanne Ann, were also hurt and were taken to the South Superhighway Medical Center.

She said the accident caused traffic on the northbound portion of the SLEx. The early morning traffic jam slowly returned to normal around 8:30, after the wrecked vehicles were removed from the area, Vidal said.

Erap son, JV, eyes House seat

By DJ Yap

ON HIS LAST TERM IN office, San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito is setting his sights on the congressional seat of the lone district on 2010 while his mother, former actress Guia Gomez, will seek to replace him.

Ejercito made the announcement over lunch with reporters on Monday, discounting the possibility of him running for senator.

Ejercito said a congressional seat would be a good preparatory move for him should he decide to run for senator in the future.

He said his mother would be an ideal choice to replace him as mayor of the city. "She has been in public service for more than 30 years. She takes care of the local finances, and there is really chance for her to run," he told reporters.

Boy, 14, stabs man he claimed stole his phone

By Marlon Ramos

POLICE ARRESTED A 14-YEAR-old boy who allegedly stabbed dead a neighbor whom he accused of stealing his cell phone in Pasay City yesterday.

Aside from the minor, police also held his older brother and three more who allegedly helped him beat up and stab the victim.

Senior Supt. Ezed Petrasanta, Pasay police chief, identified the boy's brother as Alvin Pulido, 27, and their cousin as Allan Hinatay, 28.

Petrasanta said they already turned over the minor to the city social welfare office.

He said the victim, Leo Noel Gamotea, 28, was inside an internet shop on Leveriza Street, Barangay 65 at about 2:30 a.m. when Hinatay arrived and asked him to go outside.

Once out, witnesses told police the assailants took turns punching and kicking the unsuspecting victim. They also heard the latter berate Gamotea for taking his cell phone while he was playing computer games at the Internet shop.

CALL FOR HOSTAGES' RELEASE

Christians and Muslims held an interfaith rally outside the Quiapo mosque on Friday noon to call for the safe release of three volunteers of the International Committee of the Red Cross held hostage by the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group in Sulu (See story on Page 11).

Gabriela vows to take PNP to battle in court

By Jeannette I. Andrade

AFTER CLASHING WITH Manila policemen on the streets, the militant women's group Gabriela plans to take the battle to the courts against the Manila Police District (MPD) in response to the district's lawsuit against them.

Gabriela spokesperson Joms Salvador said the group would also continue to stage rallies in front of the UN Embassy in Manila which the MPD said is a no-rally zone.

Salvador denounced the MPD's plan to file a lawsuit against the group for allegedly violation of Batas Pambansa 880 or rallying without permit as well as violation of Republic Act 7610 or the Anti-Child Abuse Act against them.

She claim the move was done in defense of the cops for not planning to file before the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and the office of the Ombudsman

QC gov't probes use of city properties by private firms

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE QUEZON CITY GOVERNment will investigate reports that city-owned properties are used by private entities to generate dole outs/income without the city government's knowledge.

City treasurer Victor Rodriguez said a task force will look into allegations that a city-owned property at the Capitol Wildlife Subdivision has been using income without their knowledge.

"I received a letter in February informing me that cell sites were erected on the property. Now, if it is really the city government's, then we will collect the back rents due us," he said.

No information

Rodriguez said the city government should have been informed of the transaction between the telecommunications firms and the ORDENA if the property is indeed theirs.

In a separate statement, city councilor and majority floor leader Ramon Jesse B. Medalla wants to summon the entities involved in the incident before the city council.

"I propose that the persons responsible for this be summoned before the council for investigation, and should they be accountable for this scam, they should not be made to return rentals to the rightful owners of the land, but also be criminally prosecuted," Jesse said.

Both Rodriguez and Jesse lamented of the incident from the city's first group, budget liaison officer.

The party-list nuisee Rodriguez on Feb. 3 and claimed that a 7,301 square meter land at the GSIS was turned over to the city government in 1980 by Inland Realty Corp.

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An action from the Ombudsman, at last

AT LAST THE OFFICE OF THE Ombudsman, known for sitting on cases that affect people close to presidential spouse Mike Arroyo, has recommended that filing of graft charges against 17 Department of Public Works and Highways officials for allegedly rigging the bid for a ₱30-million World Bank-funded road project.

Hallelujah! Let's sing praises to the Ombudsman for listening to public clamor on its inaction.

* * *

Assistant Ombudsman Mark Afandor says the agency found "an indication of collusion between and among members of the DPWH Bids and Awards Committee and the bidders."

Afandor also says his office found "patterns of behavior that appear to show collusion" among private contractors.

Here the phrases "an indication of collusion" and "patterns of behavior that appear to show collusion" in the wordings of Afandor.

They seem to show the Office of the Ombudsman is not so sure about its findings.

* * *

Without impeachment hanging over the head of Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez, do you think the public would have seen the results of the agency's investigation into the alleged rigging of bids at the DPWH?

ON TARGET
Kimmay Belfo

* * *

It was for the World Bank report, the dearness of Edmund C. de Luna, one of those involved in the scandal, to Mike Arroyo would not have been known.

* * *

It's no party of the Arroyo administration to back the criminal investigation into the childish antics of former President Estrada and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay in Cebu.

Estrada and Binay were photographed walking a World War II-vintage military jeep with a replica of a machine gun mounted on it.

If not for the publicity that was generated by the replica machine gun, the two would have looked like children stealing Infinite They were out to Museo Cebu a la Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

But then the Philippine Standard Poller didn't catch us on the juvenile gimmick and it was investigating the duo.

"He who picks a quarrel with a fool is himself worse than the fool."—Old Tagalog saying.

METROBRIEFS

No objection to HDO

THE LAWYER of the woman driver in the high-accident which killed at Ateneo school boy yesterday said he would not oppose moves to have a hold-departure order issued against his client, Lauryn Roland Winston said he is confident his client, Ms. Winston hopes to see, would face the restraint order by in the country. The case does not vow that the death of Aldus Carlo "Arnel" Rizaldos after he was hit by a van driven by Tovars inside the Ateneo campus in Quezon City on Feb. 24. **John M. Aurelio**

Back to regular uniform

PAMBLA policemen don't have to wear camouflage uniforms during scheduled official inspections. This developed after the Manila Police District issued a new memorandum in. Evening circulars state that they can wear to attend their regular police uniform for the occasion. Members of the Manila's Finest Brotherhood recommended (MBR) had earlier criticized a March 13 MPD memorandum as an attempt by the MPD brass to give "militarize" their ranks. **Jeannette Andrade**

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Boy, 14, ...

From page A-9

He said the witnesses likewise saw the boy suddenly pulled out an ice pick and stabbed Cabuso once on the left side of his body.

Bonifacio said the suspects fled when they saw the man fell.

He said neighbors brought the victim to a hospital where he died while undergoing treatment.

Police eventually found himself in to village officials and helped police to arrest the two fleeing.

He said they already filed a case against the three suspects.

Gabriela ...

From page A-9

against MPD Director Chief Supt. Nicholas Medina.

"Besides to send stones that we are serious in our intent to file a case against him for blatantly and repeatedly unconstitutional acts," the spokesperson said.

The MPD on Thursday said they are filing criminal charges against Gabriela for illegally using airguns in its rallies and for persistently staging demonstrations at a declared "no-rally" zone.

"The women of Gabriela and Pinoys will never again, whatever in court or in front of the US Embassy," Salvador said.

Obama to add 4,000 troops in new Afghan plan

WASHINGTON, MARCH 27, 2009—President Barack Obama on Friday is to unveil a new effort, dire against terror havens in Afghanistan and Pakistan, aiming to deal a death blow to al-Qaida more than seven years after the September 11 attacks.

To win a war some said was "un-fit" the new president will dispatch 4,000 extra troops to train the Afghan army, on top of 17,000 deployments already authorized, in a bold move in defiance of critics who fear a quagmire.

Obama also will send hundreds more civilian officials into Afghanistan and ramp up billions of dollars of extra aid to help anti-terror ally Pakistan recover its democracy, senior administration officials said.

"It is a clear, concise, attainable goal, and that goal is to disrupt, dismantle and defeat al-Qaeda in its safe havens in Afghanistan and Pakistan," one of the officials said on condition of anonymity.

The strategy will also establish clear benchmarks to judge the performance of the mission and stated effort by the United States and its allies in Pakistan and Afghanistan, to enable mid-course corrections, another official said.

The officials accused the Bush administration of lowering US policy "adrift" in the two nations and said they would reach out to China, India and even US foe Iran to ease the situation.

"Seven-and-a-half years after September 11, the al-Qaida core leadership, Osama bin Laden and others, have moved from Kandahar, Afghanistan, to a location unknown, somewhere in Pakistan," one official said.

"We know they are plotting new attacks against the United States, against our allies, against our forces in Afghanistan, against our Pakistani friends as well." The officials discounted the arguments of critics who oppose escalating the US role in the conflict, warning that given a vacuum, the Taliban would return in force, and bring al-Qaida along.

The officials also said the Taliban had made a "very significant comeback in the last two years" they could not be allowed to take over.

Obama called Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday to outline the new US approach.

The US president is to formally announce the new strategy to members of the military and development workers who will serve in the new nations in coming months, as well as foreign ambassadors at a White House event on Friday. AFP

Students at a madrasa complex in Quetta, Pakistan. An expansion of America's 'covert war' in Pakistan would justify jihad and see many more young men rally to fight foreign forces in Afghanistan, a radical cleric said. REUTERS

BUT CAN IT ALSO HEIGH!
Animal saver Jakrich Espasitoy of the Espasitoy Brothers' circus rides a jumping line during the premiere of the circus' show "Carnetal" in St Petersburg on March 26. REUTERS

Israel bombed trucks in Sudan in January, US officials disclose

WASHINGTON—ISRAELI WARPLANES bombed a convoy of trucks in Sudan in January that was believed to be carrying arms to be smuggled into Gaza, according to US officials.

Israeli officials refused to confirm or deny the attack, but intelligence analysts noted that the strike was consistent with other measures that Israel has taken to secure its borders.

US officials said that the airstrike took place an Israeli angle to stop the flow of weapons to Gaza during the weeks it was fighting a war with Hamas there.

Two US officials who are privy to classified intelligence assessments said that Iran had been involved in the effort to smuggle weapons to Gaza and that there had been intelligence reports that an operative with Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps had gone to Sudan to coordinate the effort.

But one former official said that the exact provenance of the arms that were being smuggled via Sudan was not known.

Although the air strike was carried out two months ago, the strike had not been publicized until Sudanese officials said Thursday that a convoy of trucks in the remote eastern part of Sudan had been bombed by what they called "American fighters," killing dozens. The strikes were first reported on several Internet-based news sites, including threewm.com.

The area where the Sudanese said the attack occurred, near Port Sudan on the Red Sea, is in isolated, desert-like patch of eastern Sudan near the Egyptian border and a notorious smuggling route, populated by mostly nomads and known as one of the poorest, least developed parts of a very poor, underdeveloped country.

Sloan Gormley, a spokesman for the US Africa Command, said: "The US military has not conducted any air strikes, fired any missiles or undertaken any combat operations in or around Sudan since October 2008, when US Africa Command formally became responsible for US military actions in Africa."

Israeli officials say that most of the weapons smuggled to Gaza flow through a labyrinth of tunnels running beneath the Egyptian-Gaza border.

Israeli military analysts said that eastern Sudan could have been a little-watched backdoor for Iranian weapons to reach Gaza. AFP

WorldBriefs

Baghdad car bomb attack kills at least 28

BAGHDAD—A car bomb ripped through a crowd in Baghdad on Thursday, killing at least 28 people, including women and children, a day after the US military said violence in Iraq was at its lowest in six years. The blast occurred near a market in the capital's Shaab neighborhood, defense and interior ministry officials said, with a further 36 people wounded. Eyewitnesses described a scene of charred bodies and burned vehicles. Four children and three women were among the dead, according to officials at two local hospitals. AFP

At least 52 killed after Indonesia dam bursts

GARUT, INDONESIA—*A dam burst* in its banks near the Indonesian capital Jakarta early Friday, drowning 52 people in a deadly torrent of muddy water that flooded hundreds of homes, health ministry officials said. Dozens of others were missing after the dam burst overnight while people were asleep, giving them little chance to flee a wall of water that came crashing into low-lying homes and that residents compared to a tsunami. AFP

Circumcision found to curb two STDs

SMALL circumcision, already shown to reduce the incidence of HIV infection in men, also reduces transmission of both herpes simplex virus type 2 and human papilloma virus, a study has found. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at least 45 million people in the United States—ages 14 and older—have had herpes, or HSV-2, the incurable infection that can cause recurrent, painful, genital warts. About 20 million are infected with human papilloma virus, or HPV, which causes various genital cancers, including most cervical cancers. There is no treatment or cure for HPV, but there is a vaccine licensed only for girls and women. AFP

For $150M: Late TV producer's LA mansion for sale

LOS ANGELES—The widow of producer Aaron Spelling is placing "The Manor" in the exclusive Holmby Hills neighborhood on the market for a jaw-dropping $150 million, making it by far the most expensive home for sale in the United States. The French chateau-style mansion has 123 rooms of grand balconies, sweeping staircases, a movie theater, a 10,345-sq. meters of space on more than 1.38 hectares and is the largest home in Los Angeles County. Among the neighbors are the Los Angeles Country Club and, not too far away, the Playboy Mansion. Spellings late husband produced hit shows such as "Charlie's Angels," "Dynasty" and "Beverly Hills 90210." He died in 2006. AP

NY art dealer charged with swindling investors

NEW YORK—A New York art dealer was arrested Thursday in an alleged $80 million scam that defrauded former tennis champion John McEnroe and other high-end collectors using art he often did not own. Lawrence Salander, 58, was arrested and charged with more than 100 counts of grand larceny, securities fraud, forgery and falsifying business records, said Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau. In all, the high-flying former owner of the Salander-O'Reilly Galleries allegedly defrauded 26 people over a 12-year period until he filed for bankruptcy in November 2007. "Salander stole from his victims in two primary ways: he sold artwork not owned by him and kept the money, and used investment money in fraudulent investment opportunities," Morgenthau said in a statement. Salander also allegedly applied for a two-million-dollar personal loan from Bank of America using other people's artwork as collateral. AFP

Thai rice imports surge as domestic prices rise

BANGKOK—Thai rice exports surged 2,600 percent in the first quarter of 2008 as high domestic prices encouraged traders to bring in cheap rice from neighboring countries, officials and traders said on Friday. Thailand is the world's biggest rice exporter, producing up to 30 million tons each year and exporting 8-10 million. REUTERS

Clean slates for youths tried by ex-judge in US

THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA on Thursday ordered the state cleared for hundreds of youths who had been sentenced by a corrupt judge.

The young people had been sent to privately run detention centers from 2003 to 2008 as part of a judicial kickback scheme that shocked Pennsylvania and the nation. The judge in the cases, Mark A. Ciavarella Jr., of Luzerne County, is one of two who pleaded guilty last month to wire fraud and conspiracy for taking more than $2.6 million in kickbacks.

The exact number of records to be expunged was not stated in the court's order; a special master is investigating the cases.

Ciavarella and the other judge, Michael T. Conahan, admitted that they had agreed to send teenagers to juvenile detention centers that paid them for the business. Under their agreements, the judges will serve 87 months in federal prison and will resign from the bench and from the bar.

The judges worked in tandem, beginning in 2002, with Conahan controlling the budget and Ciavarella overseeing the juvenile courts. They shut down a detention center run by the county and began sending the youngsters to newly built detention centers run by PA Child Care and a sister company, Western PA Child Care.

Ciavarella has said that he did not sentence juveniles who did not deserve the punishment, but the numbers suggested a different story. He sent one to four of the juvenile defendants to the detention centers from 2002 to 2006, while the rate elsewhere in the state was 1 in 30. No else routinely ignored requests for leniency, even when they were made by prosecutors and probation officers.

The order on Thursday authorized the master to vacate judgments and consent decrees and to expunge the records where necessary. The special master had submitted an 11-page report that found "there was routine deprivation of children's constitutional rights."

The special master, Senior Judge Arthur E. Grim of Bucks County, was appointed last month by the state Supreme Court to investigate whether a "travesty of juvenile justice" had occurred.

He recommended vacating judgments and expunging records in cases from 2003 to 2008 in which the young person was not represented by a lawyer and did not knowingly waive the right to counsel, and which included relatively minor offenses like misdemeanors of the third degree. AP

The WORLD

Edited by Lawrence B. Casino

Japan ready to shoot down N. Korea missile

TOKYO, MARCH 27, 2009—JAPAN GAVE ITS MILitary the green light on Friday to shoot down any incoming North Korean rocket, with tensions high ahead of a planned launch that the US and allies say will be an illegal missile test.

Japanese and US warships have already deployed ahead of the April 4-8 window, when the secretive North has said it will launch a communications satellite—warning that shooting it down would be seen as an act of war.

But South Korea, Japan and the United States have all warned the North that any launch would be unacceptable, amid fears the regime is seriously intending to test a long-range missile that could reach North America.

The security council this morning decided to issue a destruction order to sidearms," said Defense Minister Yoshimi Hamada. "We will do our best to handle any flying object from North Korea." The North said Thursday that, even rehearsing a launch to the United Nations would mix the long-running and chronic six-nation nuclear disarmament talks, dealing which North Korea has already tested one missile and an atomic bomb.

US National Intelligence Director Dennis Blair said the North wanted to show it had the technology to launch an intercontinental ballistic missile.

The North is believed to be preparing to test a Taepodong-2 that could hit Alaska.

"North Korea is seemingly preannouncement an ICBM capability through a space launch," Blair said.

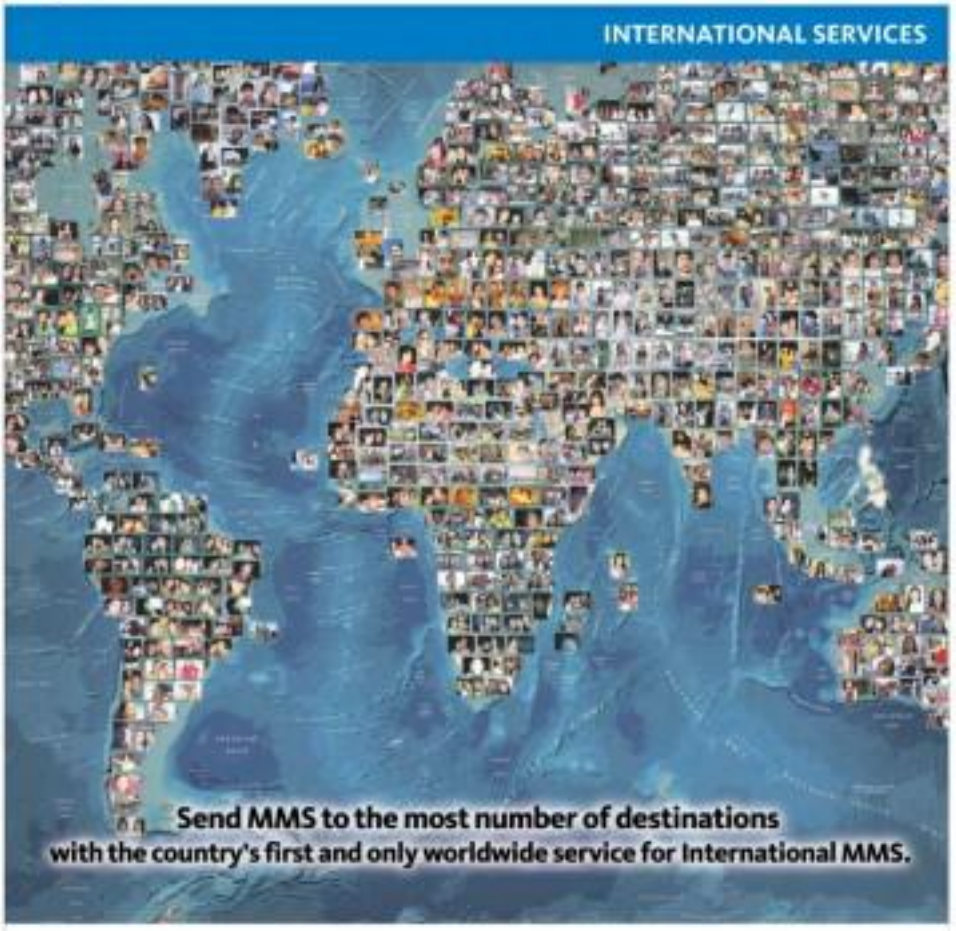
Japan has announced its plans to strike the North's Korean rocket unless it appears to pose a clearer threat, for example due to a mishap that could send an errant missile or debris flying toward the country.

"There are various scenarios—for example, a case of failure," Hamada said. "It's extremely unpleasant that an object flies over our territories." Pyongyang has reportedly already put a rocket onto one of its launch pads, raising the stakes in a delicate diplomatic strand all that has come just two months into the new US administration of President Barack Obama.

Engineers' North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il reportedly suffered a stroke in August, and some analysts speculate he is trying to demonstrate he remains firmly in control of the country.

Though a recent photo showed him looking thin, the World's official media have reported more than three times in many public appearances by Kim so far this year from over the same period in the previous year. AFP

SMART



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Pacman raps ABS-CBN anew

GACAL

Giant network promised political support, he claims

By Jaenisse W. Paya

BOXER PACQUIAO DELIVERED ANOTHER stinging blow to ABS-CBN.

Pacquiao's lawyer Franklin Gacal confirmed yesterday that "a promise of a political support" was charged by ABS-CBN to entice the Filipino ring icon to sign up with the giant network and ditch his previous deal with Solar Sports to air his blockbuster fights on GMA-7.

Gacal made the disclosure in a press conference yesterday a few hours after Pacquiao revealed in a teleconference that ABS-CBN had wanted to a newer exclusive agreement.

"He admitted to me that yes, there was a discussion on such issue, that he was promised political support on the forthcoming 2010 elections," Gacal said during a press briefing at the Renaissance Hotel in Makati City.

"But I told him ... it could possibly derail your candidacy it could be a violation of the election code and other pertinent laws. I know for a fact that media should be neutral on the electoral process."

ABS-CBN has denied in previous statements that it promised to help Pacquiao's political plans.

Local media earlier reported that ABS-CBN had offered "full media support to ensure (Pacquiao's) victory in the 2010 congressional elections."

In another released statement yesterday the influential cheesy media outfit stated it "has said everything it will say on this topic."

ABS-CBN chair Eugenio Lopez III said the network "acted in an ethical manner" regarding Pacquiao's alleged plans to transfer the television rights of his May 2 fight against Ricky Hatton.

"We did not violate any restrictions to the embargo, there is no deal on the politics," Lopez told last Tuesday.

Gacal said the world's paused-for-ground king is "hurting" from the "malicious and well-planned grand design to malign him" just 31 days before his anticipated bout against the British "Hitman."

Pacquiao said he had an agreement with ABS-CBN that the statements on his transfer would not be aired until it has been proven that Solar Sports had committed a breach of contract.

On March 16, the video of his statement from Los Angeles was shown on the ABS-CBN news show "TV Patrol World" where he said he personally approached ABS-CBN and decided to give it the right to air his fights.

Pacquiao had claimed it was an ABS-CBN lawyer who wrote that statement and added he was under the impression that the tape would be embargoed.

Hilda Koronel, ABS-CBN senior vice president for News and Current Affairs, told the Inquirer in a previous interview that the network "would not have aired Pacquiao's statement without his consent."

Lopez said Pacquiao "unequivocally denies that he approached ABS-CBN."

He said it was ABS-CBN's sports reporter Dyan Castillejo who approached Pacquiao last February "with the idea" that his fights be "aired on their TV station."

Gacal added the 30-year-old dogger "admits he is not without fault for this issue" and he was "too trusting and too accommodating, too shy to say no."

"Money was never a main consideration when he entertained ABS-CBN," said Gacal. "In fact, the documents he signed did not even stipulate what the full and total financial consideration were to be granted him by ABS-CBN."

PACQUIAO

Fabled rivalry highlights Filoil hoops

By Jaenisse W. Paya

THE CELEBRITY BASKETBALL SOCIETY HAS valry heats up early this summer as the Ateneo Blue Eagles and La Salle Green Archers face off in the opener of the 2009 Filoil Flying V Preseason Mamol V. Pengilinan Cup.

The Eagles, the reigning UAAP champions, and the Archers clash come at 4 p.m. on April 18 at the Filoil Flying V Arena (formerly The Arena) in San Juan City.

Three-time NCAA champion San Beda takes on Jones' nemesis Letran at 2 p.m., while Jose Rizal University and University of the Philippines cap the three-game bill at 6:30 p.m.

Coaches said the tournament will serve as a gauge for the collegiate stars set in July.

"It will be a part of the rookies' tryout," said Jack Santiago, assistant to La Salle head coach Franz Pumaren. "We'll see here they can blend with the team. This is the time for them to show their stuff."

Alcantara-Berta gains doubles semifinals

By Jose Navarro

THE TOP SEEDS IN BOTH DIVISIONS HAD CONTRASTING FORTUNES EVEN AS rookie Filipino hope Francis Casey Alcantara entered after earlier doubles yesterday of the 20th Shanghai Lenovo ITF Junior Championships at the Hyatt Memorial Tennis Centre.

Timea Babos of Hungary stayed on track for the girls' singles title after downing Indonesia's Grace Yuni Tjahjadi, 6-4, 6-4, but Daniel Berta of Sweden bowed out boys' top seed Henry Laqinhe of Chinese Taipei, 6-4, 2-6, 6-4 in the quarterfinals.

Berta, 17, later joined with shooters to reach the doubles semifinals after a 6-2, 7-5 win over Belarus' Daniel and Uladzimir Tkanovich.

Berta will next face off with Germany's Dominik Schulz, who posted a 6-2, 6-3 win over Jeong Ik-seok of South Korea.

India's Manish Ojha, who ousted the Laos 4 with a 6-2, 7-6, 6-4 win over Australia's Maverick Szychlit.

The top-seeded Babos, the lone

Switch surprise package Daniel Berta makes a big forehand return to top seed Henry Lingchi. PHOTO BY JOE NAVARRO

tournament started. Her win, it's been raining for two days and I have to adjust again to keep my focus," said the 15-year-old Babos, who ruled on ITF unrated tournament last week in Malaysia.

Lyubov encountered some upraising moments before pulling off a 6-1, 2-6, 6-2 victory over qualifier Despina Papamichail of Greece.

Lyubov's competitor, Ekaterina Makarova, also advanced by dismissing Ms. U Pinnock James of Bahrain, 6-1, 6-2. The 13th-seeded Russian set up a semifinal duel with Serbia's Tamara Curicek, who whipped Russia's Xenia Gogoladzeva, 6-2, 6-2.

Cebu fighters rule Abap Visayas meet

DUMAGUETE CITY—CEBU, BOHOL-ing ground of the country's top professional boxers, is making waves on the amateur front.

Cebu sailed the first Inter-Abap Visayas Amateur Boxing Championship in the Iron Thursday, sealing the domination of Bago City fighters.

Cebu, which sent 17 fighters to the finals compared to Bago's 14, won four of their six showdowns in the four-division tournament hosted by Dumaguete City Mayor Jim Credillo and Negros Mayor Elmer Credillo who bowed out of the event's first two days.

Bago won the first three title bouts with his Lessino dominating Cebu's Mohmed Dignos, 11-6, in the 44th Division's 28 kg event and Jhon Amiel Flores scoring a close 8-7 win over Ronald Ellorin in the 29 kg division. Bago's Niel Tandoyadon scored an RSC in 1:29 of the first round over Negros boy Arnold Pentorel in 46 kilos.

Cebu started its campaign when Marquito Moya came from behind and won a close 9-8 verdict over Bago's Claudio Panes in the 44th (51 kg) class.

Jessa Labrado posted an impressive 10-2 win over Gibait Alfredo Dignos in the 36-bout Boys' 37-38 kg class to spark Pesaredo's bid overall finish.

Cebu's Jack Tejeros, 15, took the gold in the 8-bout Boys' 46.5-46 kg class as he outpointed Bacolod's Alain Silvoga, 12-7. Tejeros was chosen Best Boxer.

Another notable champion was Trade Girls competitor Christine Rios, who won by RSC at 1:33 of the first round against Bacolod's Jean Rodriguez.

Give Pacquiao's sins to the devil

QUESTION OF THE DAY: HOW BAD THE beaten and teenage would been wearing (Republican)?

Manny Pacquiao, to put it lightly, earned a new lease in the eye following the biggest blunder of his holistic boxing career.

There's quite to mind.

But it's quite obvious Pacquiao, no universal solution, have and swelled countries following the very he banged big money negotiations with ABS-CBN.

Oh, the Pilipino mess've let (follow) clip through his mighty fists with their involved.

But, more than the money, Pacquiao also lost the faith and trust of loving devotees.

* * *

You doubt this bold proposition (or by your Facebook friends here)?

Well, it just so happens that, here in dotted-up Arroyo country, you've only to prod (or bait) as the last very messenger in your door neighborhood.

Wanna know how?

Try this lesser test, seen by countless countless expert Hermenchez, originally of Zamboanga.

* * *

Joke of the day—

QUESTION: Ano ti sabog ti Manny Pacquiao (a.k.a Henry Balgera)s. Impanyan a kapan?

ANSWER (tagalog)

—Isdot!

* * *

You're either a rueful celebrity or an awesome anybody, depending on how new managers measure or carve out your characters.

We still doubt Pacquiao has rejected, if not surprised, the motifs and unpredictability of the Amazon of Mukhang?

He need to consult SMS (Social Weather Stations).

Instead, my dear new one, recently new from Mangaldan, Binguinlan, by two-time national bike contenders champion Jesse Xavier Jr., Cyclist Area column:

BARE EYE

Marcelo Fernandez

* * *

SUPPORTERS: Jet, young gamers ang because sign ang sweatshop ang pantaloon ang?

P.S.—Binayad, Pinampers Boys & Co. Corporation?

* * *

There's another many item, usually.

* * *

This one is only shrank but, although it's not yet flying around in text messages, there's this infrequent suspicion that the country's premier corrupt non-official has been burdening his enormous millions through the hard-earned fruits (or

runs) of you know who.

* * *

That said, let me request you to stop cursing, please.

Let us on hands, fingers and fingers.

The Pacquiao, for the record, would.

He also admit for forgiveness.

Oh, he did not commit genocide or pattacid which he admitted Duh.

He did try to put the blame (for his misdemeanor) on ABS-CBN, which later proved that it was Pacquiao who was the evil culprit.

* * *

But not to time we put all this behind us.

Why? Well, there's reason to believe Pacquiao has learned his lesson.

He may never ever be able to allow society himself from the devotees.

But, now that Pacquiao badly needs an ongoing public mess and confidence, let's welcome him like the prodigal son.

Let's stop this Pacquiao bashing.

* * *

Now is the time to rally behind him.

Let's give the Wonder Kid to the devil.

He has obviously been enslaved by his fans.

But there may seem be another way for Pacquiao to redeem.

At this point, Hannby Chavez, a management maestro, puts it: Pacquiao has obviously been rescued from reality.

Let's help this super athlete, who has given us our proudest moments in the sports world, come home again (in our hearts).

Manny Pacquiao, like it or not, is under the weight of our sagging hopes.

* * *

(HERE The Sermon Predator Lord, *pulup kaybiga, in honor of the great nationalist and revolutionary, will be launching Rizal today at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines in Sta. Mesa, Manila. Today marks the 81st death anniversary of Dr. Pacheco, former PUP president.)*

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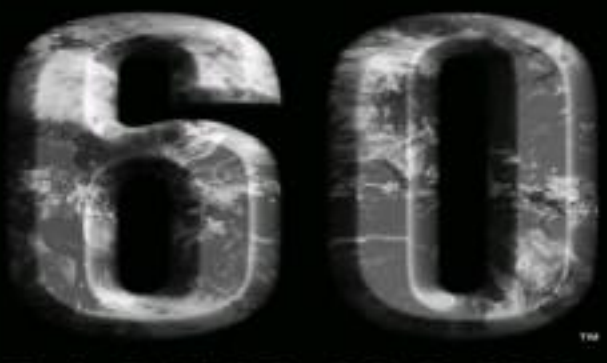

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First title for Illam

Manila batters get crack at four more today

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE INTERNATIONAL LITTLE League of Manila (Illam) clinched nine Ulbo yesterday while gaining a shot at four more championships against tough Singapore teams in the 2009 Southeast Asian Youth baseball and softball tournament at the Ateneo grounds in Quezon City.

The first Illam crowns came in the Girls' Senior division after its two entries blasted their respective rivals in clinching afternoon sets to arrange an all-Manila championship today.

Manila 1 blasted Singapore, 15-4, before Manila 2 mauled Perth, 14-3, at the upper third in the 16-under division. Manila 2 blew Perth, 12-7, in the Boys' Major semifinals at the Main Field in arranging a title showdown with Singapore which smoked Bangkok, 10-1, in the 13-and-under category.

Another Manila 2 squad reached the finals in the Boys' Minor division with a come-from-behind 8-7 win over Jakarta at Court 3 Field.

The Manilans have rolled to their bouts in the 11-13 division, however, after Singapore, unbeaten in the elimination, bowed out Manila 1, 8-2, to host to the classes.

The other Manila-Singapore title clash-in today set is the Girls' Major and Boys' Junior divisions.

Late scores and the tentative schedule are available at www.manilaillam.com.

Last night, Manila 1 defeated Jakarta in the day's most exciting semifinal duel.

Down by three runs, 7-4, Jamila slammed a one-run home run, and, after two outs, Bianca Ocampo drove in two clutch runs with a single to right field.

Diego Lozano was caught on a 3-4 play for two outs, before Bel Dela singled to left center. Dan Laurel next mowed out balls to set up a dramatic finish.

The tournament is sponsored by the Inquirer, Mister Donut, Tokyo, Tokyo, 8W, Gatorade, Hype, Philfoam Bank, Sta. Lucia Realty, STI College, Knights Capital, Pioneer Insurance, Liberty Telecoms, Adidas, Manila Hilo, 8 Stradilo, Investkor and PLDT.

Fourless Fighting showdown: 'Lion' clashes with 'Juggernaut'

HERA DIAZ AND MARY JOY TABAMO'S HEAD-lined the blockbuster card in the Fourless Fighting Championships Fourless II at which matches April 4 at the Araneta Sports Arena in Pasay City.

Action inside the octagon-arena starts at 6 p.m.

Diaz, nicknamed the Lion, and Tabamo, known as the Juggernaut, will square off for the lightweight (108 kilograms, which fans and media expect) bout between who his (mother weight) UFC point at the line against each other (right).

Next Jakarta and Diaz Hera promotions action is the other title showdown in the middleweight (100 lbs.) division of the event dubbed "Uprising" and put up by Making Network Inc. and Fourless Promotions Inc.

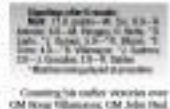
For ticket inquiries, call Ticketfair at 891-5555.

Antonio holds So to a draw

GAPAN CITY—GRANDMASTER Rogelio "Joey" Antonio Jr. successfully stalled Wesley So's surge to the title of Grandmaster here, holding the defending champion to a draw in the ninth round last night at the Dayton City Resort Hotel here.

Finishing the four-day second International Chess Federation (Fide) Grand Prix tournament with 6.5 points, Antonio forced So to a 20-move draw by repetition to share Scandinavian countries to reunite to the host for the P300,000 champion's purse.

The draw halted So's winning streak at five, although the 15-year-old GM kept his three-point lead over Antonio, who rallied through the tournament that rewards a win 2 points and a draw 1 point.



Counting his earlier victories over GM Wang Hao and GM Michael Gurevi, GM Eugene Torre, International Master Rolando Tolentino and GM Jayson Gonzales, respectively. So now totes 3½ points.

Antonio, of the Philippine Army Special Services first under GM Arbiter Tinsaye, was at second place with 6½ points on two wins and four draws.

"I just afford to change move because it will give Hao Joey a slight edge," said So, the country's highest rated player with an 80-of-2627.

Unable to gain headway with white, GM Allah Paragua settled for a draw with IM Rolando Nolte after 23 moves of a Semi-Slav. Both Paragua, the Visa Asiatic Grand Cup champion, and Nolte had 6.0 points.

IM Ronald Dalida finally captured a first game skid by holding GM Jayson Gonzales to a draw after 32 moves of a King's Indian Reversed.

In women's play Woman Fide Master Catherine Perena outshined her nearest rivals with a 10-move win over Mihal Kimberly Jane Cassimo in their 9th round tussle.

Perena, the Bigan-based player with her 9th of 2139, caught up with her victim at 6.0 points.

LANCER CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sidelights

The temptation to return, play and experience anew the hospitality of the Mikaloksk Lancer ITF Junior Tennis Championships is so huge that 13 foreign lads made a return trip to the annual event, including girls' division top-seed Timea Babos of Hungary and defending champion Noppawan Lertcheewakarn from Thailand.

Babos, who turns 16 on May, is not only determined to improve on her runner-up finish last year.

"I like to play here because it's one of my favorite courts. And I went back because I've been seeing and earning points. This tournament is a great opportunity," said Babos, who jumped from the ITF junior ranking of No. 39 prior to last year's edition to No. 7 this year.

Also seeing action for the second straight year are brothers Ben and Mac McLachlan and Jordan Kelly-Houston from New Zealand, Rudeena Ellapen from India and Stephen Wu from Australia in the boys' division.

In the girls' side, aside from Babos and Lertcheewakarn, are Beatrice Gumulya from Indonesia, Ashwaya Shrivastava, Shrivastava Babu and Kyra Shroff from India and Kamonpad Narattana, Khunpat Issara and Sirsha Lertpitakarchai from Thailand.

NESTEA FIT BEACH VOLLEY

Maharlika, MSU-Tagum spikers still unscathed

By Ronino S. Asido

TAGUM CITY—MAHARLIKA INSTITUTE OF Technology rallied on a strong finish to frustrate University of Mindanao-Davao, 17-21, 21-18, 15-12, yesterday and move a win away from a first-round Philippine Volleyball Federation-Shakey's Valley tournament Miconducting at the Tagum Beach Volley Dome.

With an average height of 6-foot-3, Mamaki Hadjirul and Mohammad Ali Miah said they needed to conquer their overaggressive early in the match to post their third straight win.

The 21-year-old Hadjirul turned on scarcities are used a rematch to conquer the match against the equally-tall UMD pair of Brad John Suraga and Gallen Manawis.

"They were excited at the start but I reminded them that if they want to make it to Boracay, they must focus on the match," said MIT coach Johnny Lee of his wards who are playing together in a tournament for the first time.

SMMA College of Southern Philippines (2-0) did also climb a semifinal slot if it beats defending champion Capitol U late night.

Capitol lost to Mindanao State University-Iligan Tawi, 16-21, 18-21, late Thursday but bounced back on the 21-10, 21-14 thrashing of fellow Cagayan de Oro squad Xavier University-Ateneo yesterday, 21-18, 21-14.

MSU-T was also eyeing a Last 4 slot against Holy Cross of Davao College in prem time.

In the distaff side, MSU-Tagum (2-0) cleared in on another Boracay stint after upending Jose Maria College 15-21, 24-22, 15-11.

Also clinching their second triumphs are UMD, a 25-16, 15-14 winner over Holy Cross, and Ateneo de Davao University, which conquered sister school Xavier, 21-9, 21-14.

Arrows was going for its third win against Holy Cross but eight while defending women's champion Ilin Tagum (1-1) was trying to stay alive against JMC.

The Boracay Finals is set May 8 to 9 with the Mindanao qualifiers joining their counterparts from the Visayas and Luzon legs.

BEACH FOOTBALL Organizers and supporters of beach football lead the ceremonial kick opening the Tropang Grosvenor Resort Football Tournament in Boracay, Aklan. From left, Grosvenor Mountain brand manager Sherwin Arcos, Kiwanis Club treasurer governor Jimmy Ng, Kiwanis Club district governor Ruth Layson, tournament director Ooh Mazaniero and Kiwanis Club of Boracay president Lory Gaac. The month-long age-group tournament for boys and girls drew 12 teams.

Tiu eyes second drag racing win

SOME 120 SPEEDSTERS ARE EXPECTED to vie for the different titles in the 2009 Sea-Ming Coffee National Drag Racing Championship-Balintawak Trophy Series opener in the Batangas Racing Circuit drag strip in Nasugbu, Batangas, for its second leg today.

Defending champion Jonathan Tiu of AS-Hawker Racing seeks a second win after topping the Clash International Speedway opener with a new record time of 9.7 (20 seconds).

Tiu's record at the BRC strip is 9.909 secs.

Among his toughest rivals in the premiere Quick 8 division are Jessel Garcia and Wby Dagondon of BC motorsport-Hawker.

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Editor Teddyboy S. Melendres • Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

SPORTS

Lakers win on Pistons' floor, finally

DETROIT—THE LOS ANGELES LAKERS WON IN DETROIT FOR the first time in seven years on Thursday, Kobe Bryant scoring 30 points in a 92-77 victory over the injury-hit Pistons.

Los Angeles scored the final 20 points of the third quarter to pull away from the Pistons, who were without injured trio Allen Iverson, Richard Hamilton and Rasheed Wallace.

The Lakers also snapped a nine-game losing streak at Detroit's home court, including three losses in the 2004 NBA Finals. It was Pau's first win at The Palace since Jan. 8, 2002.

Lakers coach Phil Jackson, however, was not overly impressed by his team's performance given the extent of Detroit's injuries.

"They were shorthanded," Jackson told reporters. "We should've won."

The Lakers ended 42-39 at the half before the large third quarter 20-0 run put the game away.

"When the playoffs come around, I don't think anybody wants to play this team," Bryant said of the Pistons. "It is never easy for us in this building. It feels good to finally walk out of here with a win."

Bryant also had eight rebounds and seven assists, while Derek Fisher chipped in with 15 points.

Will Bynum led the Pistons with 25 points and 11 assists and Antonio McDyess added 14 points and 12 rebounds.

Los Angeles (57-14) won their fourth game in a row while ending Detroit (34-37) last their third in a row. The Pistons are just three games clear of a playoff spot in the regular season schedule heads into its final three weeks.

"There's not much you can do playing against a team like the Lakers with the lineup we had available," Detroit coach Michael Curry said. "It's a psychological (bit knowing they're [the injured players] going to return soon."

In Chicago, Jalen Rolmson scored 27 points as the Bulls beat the Miami Heat, 106-87, for their sixth win in seven games and moved into a seventh-place tie with Detroit in the Eastern Conference.

In Portland, Oregon, LaMarcus Aldridge scored a season-high 29 points and added 12 rebounds to help Portland end Phoenix's winning streak at six, 120-109. Reuters, AP

New F1 team among quickest in practice

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—HONDA driver Jenson Button topped the first day of practice for the Australian Grand Prix on Friday, but it was Brawn GP's Rubens Barrichello who was second fastest in the second session with 1:26.157, ahead of Toyota's Jarno Trulli on 1:26.350.

Trulli was among the drivers complaining of low grip in the cool conditions.

"I can still not completely happy with the car balance," Trulli said. AP

Williams' Nico Rosberg was quickest in both the opening and second sessions. Friday posting a best of 1:1 minutes, 26.1555 seconds in the second session.

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GOLDEN VICTORY Antonio Pena of Villanueva Andro against Onbe in 'Everyday' UNCAA Season 71 game. The Wildcats defeated the second-seeded Blue Dorils, 75-65, to advance to the Elite Eight. It was the first time in more than 30 years that Villanueva defeated Onbe. AFP

A lot of Tiger, Gore at Palmer Invit'l

ORLANDO, FLORIDA—BYTHEIR own wins Jason Gore and Tiger Woods changed their fortunes at the Arnold Palmer Invitational on Thursday.

Gore was not making any results from an overhaul to his swing until he ran off three birdies over the final four holes for a 5-under 65 that gave him a one-shot lead.

Woods was in the worst in the area and in a final round until he had eight consecutive one-putts—including four straight birdies—that put him in a good frame of mind with a 66 in a course where he has won five times in a row.

"I was just hitting it well, and I had to scramble and grind it out and manage it well," Woods said. He managed just four saves today only 24 putts in the first round after ranking 74th in putting out of 79 players at the US Championship two weeks ago.

Tim Herron, after an ailment in a playoff 10 years ago, and Jeff Overton had a 66, while the group at 67 included Ho-sung Choi, Nick Watney and Mark Wilson, who had reason to feel confident on the first tee but soon shot bold his own.

Gore is a US PGA Tour veteran, but the golf hasn't gone so well lately. He lost his card and has, you, then decided after Qualcomm to stick with Nike irons and no clubs using.

Genato, 75

DARKNESS IN CAPIZ'S GENATO. MOTHER IN LIGHT OF THE PHILIPPINE Diet operations fan and television Quintin Ramon, passed away after a lingering illness last Thursday. She was 75.

Her wake is at Our Lady of Fatima Chapel, Tierra Nueva Village, Alabang-Zapote Road. Interment will follow the 10 a.m. Holy Mass at the Lower Chapel of the St. James the Greater Parish in Ayala Alabang Village. In lieu of flowers, her family would appreciate donations to the Tierra Nueva Chapel Construction Committee.

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IN THIS ISSUE
Globe gets P1-B 5-year loan from Landbank /B2
Peso rise bobbled RP exports /B8

BUSINESS
Editor Raul G. Manuelo • Assistant Editor Carrie S. Mariano

Sandigan clears way for PNB-Allied merger

Junks gov't bid for restraining order

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ANTIGRAFT COURT SANDIGANBAYAN HAS cleared a legal stumbling block to the merger of tobacco magnate Lucio Tan's banking units Allied Banking Corp. and Philippine National Bank.

Allied Bank, in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, said it received yesterday a resolution from the Sandiganbayan's 5th division dismissing the government's petition for a restraining order on the merger of PNB and Allied Bank.

The Lucio Tan group's legal counsel, Joselito Mendoza, said in an interview yesterday that the case was filed as part of Civil Case 0008 (Republic of the Philippines versus Lucio Tan) wherein certain shares of Allied Bank were among those under legal dispute.

The government, through the Ombudsman and the Presidential Commission on Good Government, earlier asked the Sandiganbayan to stop the merger on the grounds that it would be difficult to track the Allied Bank shares that the government was running after since the bank was merged with PNB.

As the Sandiganbayan found no merit in the petition, Mendoza said the government's recourse would be to go to the Supreme Court. In the meantime, he said the merger between PNB and Allied Bank was still awaiting approval from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

During the hearings, Mendoza had argued that the disputed shares would not be lost even after the merger, which will be done through an exchange of shares.

Allied Bank was also required by US banking regulators to acquire a 20-percent stake in Oriental Bank of California prior to its merger with PNB, which was earlier targeted to be completed within this year. The stake will be acquired by Lucio Tan and other individual shareholders of PNB as the latter itself was not allowed by the US government to buy an American bank.

Asked for an update on the merger, a source from the Lucio Tan group said yesterday: "Parties are currently working on the divestment of Allied Bank's interest in Oriental Bank. While there is no merger yet in the legal sense, integration plans and activities for both banks are

SANDIGANBAYAN B2

DEFENSE AGAINST TAKEOVER

Lopez Inc. gets 43% of First Holdings

THE LOPEZ GROUP HAS consolidated a 43.13-percent stake in First Philippine Holdings Corp. to an unlisted unit as another step to fortify the defenses of the holding company for power generation businesses, now the crown jewel of the clan's energy empire, from potential hostile takeover attempts.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, FPHC disclosed that about 254 million of its shares were transferred from publicly listed Benpres Holdings Corp. to Lopez Inc., a privately held holding company and parent company of Benpres chaired by patriarch Oscar Lopez.

The transfer was made through a deed of assignment signed last March 19 for the purpose of vesting on Lopez Inc. the voting rights pertaining to the FPHC shares.

The transaction was in line with the voting trust agreement signed by the Lopez-owned companies in December last year which sought to "protect the legitimate shareholders and creditors of Benpres and FPHC against groups with hostile or inimical interests that could act against creating or furthering shareholder value."

With the transfer, Benpres is still left with shares in ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., Bayan Telecommunications Holdings Corp., Bayantel Corp., Rockwell Land Corp. and Sky Vision Corp.

Some key Lopez-owned companies have attracted interest from various groups seeking to buying opportunities. Meralco, for instance, was earlier widely believed to be the subject of a hostile

LOPEZ B2

Currencies

PESO-DOLLAR RATE
P48.19 = $1
As of Sep 10, March 27, 2009

Stock Market

PSEi breaches 2,000 mark

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE index yesterday rose 2.5 percent and broke past the crucial 2,000 mark for the first time in four months on rising optimism that the US may have seen the worst of the economic downturn that has plagued the rest of the world.

The PSEi gained 51.09 points to close at 2,040.26, or across-the-board gains by various sectors, especially services whose index surged by 5 percent. The last time the index closed above 2,000—a key barrier over the last five months—was on Jan. 7.

The counters for the industrial sector and holding firms were likewise up by 2.16 percent and 1 percent, respectively.

The rally was led by index heavyweight PLDT, which accounted for 11.89 percent of the P3.8 billion worth of trades at the local bourse. While investors remained wary about PLDT's recent foray in Mitratel, Electro Co., analysts said its share price was buoyed by the move to Americas Depository Receipts at the New York Stock Exchange.

PLDT closed 5.54 percent higher at P72.150 a share.

The Lopezes' renewable energy generation arm Energy Development Corp., the second most actively traded stock, went up 2.7 percent to close at P15.80.

Likewise actively traded were property developer Megaworld Corp. and Globe Telecoms whose share prices gained 0.7 percent and 3.57 percent, respectively, to close at P0.66 and P933.

PSEi B2

Globe gets ₱1-B 5-year loan from Landbank

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ayalas' GLOBE TELECOM has availed itself of a P1-billion five-year loan from the state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines to cover part of its capital expenditures for this year.

The long-term loan facility was signed by Globe and Landbank yesterday that whereas company officials said is the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Globe has earmarked $300 million to $400 million in capital expenditures this year mostly to expand its countries broadband business, including its 3G and 3.5 businesses. Of the total capital requirement, $70 million will be spent for cable facilities and other support

Will cover part of capex

and non-recurring items.

The company has also asked the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) for a chance to apply for the remaining 3G radio frequencies in the country.

The NTC earlier announced an intention to frequently existing spectrum assignees for 3G—the third generation of standards and technology for mobile networks—from applying for additional 3G frequencies. Aside from Globe Telecom, the proposed disqualification also affects other existing 3G assignees such as Smart Communications and Digital Telecommunications.

A leading provider of post-paid mobile phone services, Globe Telecom is also the second largest in 3G, posting more than $200 million in 3G mobile and broadband technologies and services since 2006.

3G networks enable network operators to offer users a wider range of more advanced services, while achieving greater network capacity through improved spectral efficiency. Services include wide-area wireless voice telephony, video calls and broadband wireless data, all in a mobile environment. Additional features also include better data transmission capabilities.

TKC unit sees 30% jump in output

TRANSIMEX STEELWORKS CORP., A SUBsidiary of listed firm TKC Steel Corp., has commissioned a new billet furnace to its Jaro City plant that can boost manufacturing output by 30 percent.

In a regulatory filing, TKC Steel president Anthony Dikitis said the installation and commissioning of the furnace was an important part of Transimex Steelworks' preparations for construction activities that would likely be spurred by the P332-billion euro stimulus package this year.

He said this was also part of the group's strategy to target opportunities in other parts of the world where stimulus plans were in place.

"The increased capacity will enable us to position ourselves strategically for the second quarter and also provides us the opportunity to pursue available export market opportunities as we speak, we are presently in the midst of preparations to service a 5,000-metric ton (MT) export shipment to Bangladesh by the end of the month," he said.

"Moreover, the improvements in equipment and operating procedures will be the crucial links in the overall process at the time our blast furnace comes on stream in the near future," he added.

The commissioning of the billet furnace, which has a capacity of 60 MT in turn-about, entailing production cycle time.

The furnace will serve as the feeding receptacle for liquid steel produced in Transimex's hydroscopic melting furnaces.

The addition of this facility in the Iligan City plant is an important component of the steel manufacturer's expansion and capability enhancement program, which dated last year.

Abigail L. Ho

Meralco secures Carmelray power deal

By Abigail L. Ho

THE LOPEZ-LED MANILA ELECtric Co. (Meralco) has purchased the electric distribution system of CIP II Power Corp. (CIPP) and inked the exclusive right to sell power within Carmelray Industrial Park II in Laguna.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) parent Team Asia Oil and Energy Development Corp. said that under a memorandum of agreement signed on Thursday, CIPP will transfer to Meralco the ownership of the existing power distribution system in the industrial park "upon Meralco's payment of a purchase price still to be agreed upon by the parties."

The transfer will take effect on April 9 or upon approval of the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA), if needed, and Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC).

"We are supposed to sign one deed of sale on April 9, and the price will be about P62 million, but we're still negotiating on the terms," Meralco legal counsel Jose Ronald Valles said in an interview yesterday.

A separate memorandum of agreement, the time signed by CIR Meralco and Carmelray JTIC Corp., would make Meralco the sole and exclusive power distributor in the industrial estate.

Under the agreement, "CIP will transfer to Meralco its rights and obligations under the concession agreement dated Dec. 3, 2000, which grant CIPP the exclusive right to sell electricity to the locators of the Carmelray Industrial Park II."

The agreement is also subject to the approval of Pena and possibly the ERC, if necessary.

Peak load at the industrial park reaches about 14 megawatts.

Meralco distributes electricity to all consumers issues within its franchise area with the exception of the Cavite Export Processing Zone Authority in Rosario, Cavite.

Industrial customers that will purchase electricity from Meralco can actually from there's also in the distribution utility provides a special rate. Joint rate of P3.27 a kilowatt-hour (kWh). This is more than P1 per kWh cheaper than Meralco's blended industrial rate of P4.06 a kWh, and almost 20 centavos a kWh lower than the average locally. Time-of-use rate of P3.41 a kWh.

The power distributor is also currently in the process of constructing large power users with self-generation facilities to go back to the grid, as this will reduce the country's consumption of Bunker fuel.

Apex renews mining claims in Compostela Valley

By Nina T. Chicharo

APEX MINING CO. SAID ON FRIDAY that it has received government confirmation that its mining tenements around Mt. Diwata in Compostela Valley remain valid.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Apex said that it has 25-year mineral production sharing agreements (MPSAs) with the government on a 1,338.3-hectare property and another 676-hectare site in the resource-rich area.

The MPSAs were obtained in 2007 and 2005, respectively. Both properties are in Mawab town.

Citing a confirmation from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, Apex said that its MPSAs remained valid and that the company has complied with the terms and conditions of its agreements.

It said it has also undertaken mining activities in accordance with MGB-approved work programs.

PSEi breaches 2,000 mark

From page B1

"The latest policy announcements and initiatives of the US, in particular, with respect to battling and containing the further deterioration of the financial sector have been met with an optimistic eye which enthused investment trades to their appetites," said Antonio Cabrera, a dealer at Secured Capital Equities.

"Part of this sentiment of course rubbed off on stocks and the rationale rally to-date is proof of this. Yet, these are forward looking trades, anticipating better days ahead," he said.

But any indication that the plans and strategies would fall short of expectations would most likely result in investors once more and prompt them to seek cover in low-dollar assets, Cabrera said.

There were 78 gainers and 80 losers while 34 stocks were unchanged.

Doris C. Dumlao

Lopez Inc. gets 43% of First ...

From page B1

takeover attempt by Steel and Investment giant Iron Mitigrel Corp. until The Lopezes agreed to sell a 20-percent stake to the power retailer to Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., which is controlled by First Pacific Co. Ltd. of Hong Kong.

First Pacific, through local holding company Metro Pacific Investments Corp., has likewise grabbed up some of the businesses unloaded earlier by the Lopez family such as water distributor Maynilad Water Services Inc. and North Luzon toll-way operator Manila North Tollways Corp.

FPHC is the leading private sector holding company in the development of the country's utilities and infrastructure. Its power generation subsidiary, First Gen Corp., is the biggest vertically integrated power generation company in the Philippines with an installed capacity of 2,302 megawatts, accounting for about 15 percent of total installed capacity in the country today.

The holding company also has interests in manufacturing and property businesses. First Philippine Industrial Park is a leading industrial park in the country, while Rockwell Land Corp. is the leader in the country to develop a complete, high-end, inner-city community. Doris C. Dumlao

Sandigan clears way for ...

From page B1

proceeding."

Oriental Bank, which is headquartered in San Francisco, has total assets of about $168 million (more than P8 billion).

Meanwhile, the automated teller machine (ATM) systems of PNB and Allied Bank have been integrated to allow each bank's clients to use on their bank's ATM network free of charge—despite the fact that PNB and Allied Bank are on separate ATM networks.

The union will create the country's fourth-biggest bank with combined resources of P320 billion, boosting PNB's position which is currently at No. 6. It will result in a combined distribution network of 625 branches and 814 ATMs nationwide, the third largest network in the country.

The merger is also also seen benefiting the bank's overseas remittance business given its international footprint of 123 branches and offices across Asia-Pacific, Europe, Middle East and North America.

After the merger, the Lucio Tan group will end up with 80.7 percent control of PNB, which will be the surviving entity.

SSS collects ₱797M in delinquent premiums

Women of Mindanao, movers of the economy

MARCH CELEBRATES WOMEN POWER and so I would like to take this time to honor and recognize the women of Mindanao who continue to be its greatest resource and treasure.

I have met many women in my advocacy work in Mindanao. These women are so successful in business. But more significantly, these women have gone out of their air-conditioned offices and the luxury of their homes to bring investments to Mindanao.

There is Rona U. Fine, vice president for Mindanao of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, who was recently considered the point person for Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippine-East Asean Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA).

Rona has made it her duty to develop small businesses, particularly those in agriculture, corn and hog raising in South Cotabato where she is from.

Ester Pattugalan and Lucy Castillo, meanwhile, are outstanding women in the furniture and handicraft sector. Both women spend all their energies honing their craft, looking for new markets and joining foreign trade exhibits. They always manage to bring home the big orders, thus creating jobs for all of their workers and their families. Ester is also the only Asean honoree in the International Design Yearbook 2002.

Tourism

There is Emma Bandino, Mary Ann "Bebey" Monasterio, who is reviving the private sector in promoting tourism in Davao City. While chair of the MBMP-EAGA Tourism Council, Baby had inspired many women in the travel sector from all over Mindanao to think "out of the box" and not to be discouraged by negative events that hamper the growth of the sector.

The Outstanding Women of the Nations (TOWNS) awardee, Evelyn Abellera Magno, is the first woman honorary governor from Mindanao. Evelyn is the chair of the family-owned university in the City of Davao and as an educator, I have seen how she had touched the lives of many of her students, particularly those coming from the poorest communities.

Risk woman is everywhere—from medical and dental missions, giving out assistance during disaster and calamities and helping others find better opportunities in life.

Charito Pontemplico, Sally Landeagan and Daisy Tobias had transformed their love for orchids into a very lucrative business and in so doing had employed and also trained hundreds of moms and women to develop their own livelihood related to flora and fauna.

Women are always travel savvy and we can easily spot them in the restaurants and food businesses in Davao City. I really admire the vision of Charito Lizada, who set the trend in the barbecue business 30 years ago.

Following in her footsteps is eldest daughter, Marylou Lizada Aurin, who started the "tapaling" concept to the city and made it into a chain of eateries.

The "bahon manok" was introduced in the city by another woman, who seems to be always on the go and that is Lesia Bonifacio. The coffee shop business in the city was started by Gaby Gaerlan, who made famous the "durian coffee." The businesses of these women were copied and imitated by many. But despite all the competition, they found fulfillment knowing that they had motivated many to follow the trend that they had set.

Joji Ilagan-Bisay

Prime mover

In the end, what is important is that jobs were given to multitudes of people.

In the small town of Tandag, Surigao, you will find Annie Ty, president of the Tandag Chamber of Commerce and the prime mover of the Red Cross. She plays a very important role in the development of entrepreneurs and generation of jobs in such a far-flung area.

Zamboanga del Norte is home to Rose Lim, president of a rural bank and owner of cordless production plant. She plans to double her production and increase her export volume by 20 percent next year, thus giving more jobs to her workers, mostly women and their families. Lawyer and educator Marvel Engracia owns and operates a school in Zamboanga City and generously shares her expertise with many other technical schools in the region for them to improve their training delivery.

Mindanao's top mother and daughter team in jewelry, Imelda and Hilmes Ingles, established their own foundation that grants educational scholarships. Emilia is also the head of the Divine Mercy Apostolate in Davao and has her hands full going around the different parishes doing works of mercy and propagating the devotion to the Divine Mercy.

These women had worked in partnership with many of the business organizations in Mindanao, seeking ways to accelerate the economic momentum through the programs that they are implementing.

Social component

Ruth Milallo Javellana of Philippine Business Women Development Foundation (PBWDF) and Myrna Lim of the Women in Education and Development of Cotabato City ensure that their development programs have a social component to ease poverty in the areas where they operate.

There are many more women like them, who do business with a heart. They realize that aside from making a profit, it is also their responsibility to nurture the communities where they do their business.

These women are to be admired for their creativity and their ability to make very quick decisions amid an economic turmoil. They will never allow anything to break their spirits and their will to succeed, and that is what makes Mindanao women different!

(Joji Ilagan Bisay is an advocate for the development of the region. She is chair of Joji Ilagan Foundation (www.jojiilaganfoundation.com); president, Philippine Coil Grocery Alliance and Mindanao Tech Voc Schools Association; Mindanao representative, Export Development Council. E-mail comments: jojibisay@yahoo.com)

Employers threatened with legal action

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM collected a total of ₱797 million in employer contributions from companies, schools failed to remit their employees' premiums in 2008.

Romulo Neri, SSS president and chief executive, said in a statement that the pension fund had to resort to legal actions before it was able to collect a significant part of the amount.

Neri said that companies sued by the SSS have since paid a total of ₱221.39 million, while other that responded demand letters raised in a total of ₱475.38 million.

The SSS complaints against delinquent employers are filed to court or before the Social Security Commission, the agency's high-est policy-making body which hears cases on SSS-related disputes.

Last year, the SSS filed charges against 1,625 delinquent employers, 280 of whom failed to register and refused to present employment records to SSS account officers who monitor compliance with the Social Security Law.

"The rest of the cases were for non-remittance of contributions, which remains as the most common violation among employers," Neri said.

He added that employers' failure to remit their workers' dues constitute to the weakened capability of the SSS to provide members their benefits and loans during times of need.

Neri explained that employers are required to remit their workers' SSS premiums on or before the 15th day of the following month.

Under the law, delinquent companies are charged a 3-percent monthly penalty for late contributions.

Violations of the law carry fines of up to ₱20,000 and a maximum imprisonment of 12 years.

According to Quezon Rep. Lorenzo Tañada III, chair of the House committee on human rights, about half a million enterprises all over the country failed to remit the mandatory contribution of their workers as of Sept. 30, 2007.

Of these, 144,603 were from the National Capital Region, 173,250 from Luzon, 80,807 from the Visayas, and 70,946 from Mindanao.

Banks urged to educate clients

By Michelle V. Ramos

LIVING LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE financial meltdown is advised economists, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has advised domestically situated banks and nonbank financial institutions to free ensure clients' close understanding of new investment products before these are sold to them.

In a speech delivered before insurance industry players this week, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the global financial turmoil that emanated from the United States has stressed the importance of public education before newly-innovated financial instruments are sold.

"We must be careful not to forget the public that we ultimately serve. We must remember that the financial sophistication of the investing public may not necessarily coincide with the pace of financial innovation," Tetangco said.

He said discrepancy between the level of financial sophistication of financial institutions and that of their clients pose problems at the end of the day.

Tetangco said the financial meltdown in the United States and Europe, which eventually evolved into a full blown global economic crisis, underscored the need for public education before newly-innovated financial instruments are sold.

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PROPERTY TAXES
Senior citizens' exemption opposed

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE'S TAX think tank has turned down a proposal to exempt low-income senior citizens from paying real property tax on their homes, saying such a move would compromise the fiscal position of local governments.

In a paper commenting on House Bill No. 4550, the National Tax Research Center said the proposal may also encroach on LGUs' fiscal autonomy since the tax concerned is a local tax.

Cebu Rep. Oscar G. Moligatan (1st district), who sponsored the bill, said HB 4550 was meant to help senior citizens at a time when prices of basic commodities have skyrocketed beyond the reach of minimum wage earners.

"Senior citizens are now in the twilight years of their lives and many of them, having retired from work, have no sufficient income to support their families or their daily needs," Moligatan said in his note explaining the bill.

The NTRC said that while it recognized the intentions of the bill to help elderly people in society, the proposed tax exemption may not be advisable because of its adverse effects on local revenues.

"The property until real property tax was one of the major sources—accounting for nearly half—of LGU revenues.

Assuming that 2 percent of the assessed or taxable values of lands and improvements in all LGUs are owned by senior citizens with taxable income below the poverty line, LGUs would forego an estimated ₱222.62 million in real property tax revenues," NTRC added.

Regarding LGUs' fiscal autonomy, NTRC said it would be more practical to give local governments the leeway to expand the tax benefits of senior citizens on top of what they are now providing.

According to the DOF unit, LGUs currently maintain autonomous levels and tax rates that are higher than the minimum prescribed in the Local Government Code.

Also, the NTRC said the proposed bill would result to discrimination against senior citizens who are homeless or who stay in rented or leased houses since the tax exemption would not cover rental properties.

The think-tank added that the assertion that senior citizens have no sufficient income and that they are the ones supporting their families "may not be correct."

"One aspect of Filipino culture is the extra care for the older members of the family," it said. "Thus, senior citizens are generally under the care of their children or other relatives and do not spend for their daily needs."

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ISUZU

Editor Cesar D. Manguerra

SCIENCE/HEALTH

BODY BALANCE

RP wellness team to cleanse 'toxic overload' in the body

GOOD BOOKS. Author-icon-turned-health-advocate, now heads Global Vital Source. NOEL ACTRES

By Tess R. Salazar

Health writer

NUTRIENTS REAL OR SYNthetic anymore. Everything has become artificial—adverse environmental chemicals have affected the food chain of humans and animals. Pollution seeps into our water, air and food supply. Scientists and health advocates now stress that it's time to truly take stock of our environments and take the holistic view.

Which, for instance, may be to caution mixed with pollutants like mercury, a chemical that could find its way into fish. Phyllis A. Balch, CNC, a well-known certified nutritional consultant, cited in "Prescription for Dietary Wellness" that real meat are also contaminated by pesticides and other heavy metals such as lead, arsenic and iodine. Raw and dangerous strains of bacteria and viruses have invaded our food and waters. The very source of life—water—has become largely polluted as well.

Medium for contamination

Studies also point to red meat and dairy products as medium for bacterial and chemical contamination. Such is the case of the current Ebola-Reston virus outbreak in some hog farms in Luzon.

Toxicologist Samuel Epstein (author of the "Politics of Cancer") and David Steinman (author of "Diet for a Poisoned Planet") co-authored "The Safe Shopper's Bible" (A Consumer's Guide to Economic Household Products, Cosmetics and Food) that gives a comprehensive guide to those who would like to reduce their risk of exposure to harmful chemicals found in most brand-name household products, cosmetics, foods and beverages.

Widely distributed environmental chemicals, pointed "The Detox Study," a book by nutrition biochemist Dr. Caffin Campbell and Thomas Campbell II, have been shown to disrupt hormones. Chemicals, which include dioxins and PCBs, persist in the environment because they are not metabolized when consumed. Thus, they are not excreted from the body.

Some of these chemicals are known to promote cancer cells, although hormonic may not be at significant risk unless one consumes excessive quantities of meat, milk and fish. Mercury is present in most seafood, while the presence of trace amounts of radioactive chemicals comes from consuming animal products yet another reason consuming meats produced animal-based foods can be risky.

Bio-regenerative medicine expert Dr. Sam Revital, a chemist, molecular biologist and cancer survivor, in an interview with Inquirer former tree weeks ago, admitted that he personally avoids red meat and fried foods, citing that frying animal fats were "very dangerous."

He also cited the mercury, arsenic and chromium it in the water not toll find their way into plants and aquatic organisms.

Some comes one group in the Philippines calling for a change in our way of thinking. Meeting to "lessen hospital visits," a group called Global Vital Sources chaired by Jean Gonllosura, a Filipino international fashion icon, second-health advocate, gathered a number of doctors, therapy and nutritionists, wellness gurus, yoga teachers and nuns and priests to practice cleansing/detoxification (physical, emotional, spiritual cleansing), digestive cleanse (natural elimination of years of unprocessed fats, particularly gallstones caused by bad cholesterol) and organic nutrition (which stresses the importance of organic fruits and vegetables).

The Global Vital Source, which, according to Gonllosura, is currently being tapped to be included as part of the country's medical tourism series, has constructed digestive cleanses and Chinese & Scottish weddings in hundreds of people all over the country. The group is also set to do the worldshops abroad.

Speakers

Among guests who listened to about 40 participants during last month's Cleanse & Nourish Clean Workshop at the Discovery Suites in Ortigas were cardiologist Dr. Eugene Fonacier, vice president of Medical Doctors (who talked comprehensively about cardiovascular diseases and their causes and prevention.

Fonacier talked about the healing of CHDs, the new phenomena of cell centric diseases such people in their 20s suffering heart attacks and other possible lifestyle diseases.

Dr. Maldonia Valera, senior vice president of Philhealth, discussed the prevalent risk factors among Filipinos, vulnerability data, how things work, their side-effects and safe combinations.

US-based holistic nutritionist Dale Flores, practitioner of Global Vital Source, talked about Cleanse and Nourish 101.

As Rimonso, an energy healer, spiritual coaches, body balance therapist, drew upon alignment practitioner and reiki master, discussed chakras, discussed energy points that cause disease, and the essential of body balance to establish spiritual and mental harmony. Yoga practitioner Raya Manangkil gave Yoga 101 to the 40 participants.

Participanga-based Counselor Sister Mary Stern talked about spiritual healing and the wonders of being always in love.

Global Vital Sources, which espouses a holistic approach to keep people from being in hospitals, explained that the digestive cleanup is a detoxification principle which causes the discharge of the accumulated toxins from the body's digestive tract, which includes the liver, gallbladder, small and large intestines and the colon. This is an all-natural method of cleansing the body by using 8 herbal formulations known to work to rebuild, repair and health itself.

E-mail the author at tsalazar@inquirer.com.ph.

Diabetes is like a terrorist in the night

MEDICAL FILES

Rafael Castillo, M.D.

DR. HOMOBONO CALLEJA, ONE OF THE Philippine's foremost endocrinology, emphasizes in the schedule "vaccination" speech for the Philippine Journal of Internal Medicine that diabetes is a cardiovascular disease by itself. And that is so, he believes, right even the time when the blood sugar may not be that elevated yet.

Dr. Calleja or Bill as we fondly call him, is a past president of the Philippine Medical Association, Philippine Heart Association and Philippine College of Physicians and the founding director of the St. Luke's Heart Institute. He has trained many home-grown cardiologists who are now practicing in various parts of the country. At 80, he runs and golf golfs perfect par 3 golf course and maintains at the golf course with his terrorist short game and putting finesse.

Bill shows the same level of expertise in medicine because as he exhibits on the golf course—calculated, deliberate. I had the privilege to be in the same panel with him a few months ago to discuss diabetes and hypertension.

Diabetes used to be recognized only as a risk factor just like high blood pressure, smoking or cholesterol problems. But now, many heart experts like Bill contend that a diabetic is just like someone who has a heart disease already and may even be considered a high-risk patient or a patient candidate to develop a heart attack or stroke or kidney failure. And all these, without the individual—who thinks himself in good shape—realizing it.

Linking DM with CVD, stroke

Bill cited a recent survey among physicians conducted by the Heart Institute of the University of the Philippine College of Cardiology and the American Diabetes Association linking diabetes mellitus (DM) with coronary artery disease and stroke. The survey showed that DM is the highest or most dominant risk factor that cardiovascular disease (CVD), higher than traditional risk factors of smoking, hypertension, hypercholesterolemia or obesity. Further, DM is associated with more extensive coronary artery atherosclerosis and blood vessels in the eyes, brain, kidneys and peripheral arteries in the neck, arms and lower extremities. These blood vessel changes appear several years before overt DM is manifested.

Studies also show that just another risk factor for CVD, DM can be as unpredictable and severely called CVD," Bill says. "The increasingly accelerating connection between DM and CVD is compelling," he adds.

Bill explains that the manifestations of DM affect more arteries and blood vessels—from the big to the small ones or arterioles—than any other disease. Some of the currently known risk factors affects more illness, disability and death than DM, according to Bill. "Indeed, DM is not only a major risk factor for CVD but in reality DM is CVD that destroys the vascular beds of several target organs," Bill stresses.

Still not convinced

Bill laments that many internists, diabetologists, nephrologists, neurologists and ophthalmologists are still not convinced that DM is a classic model of cardiovascular pathology, with a potential for malignant and risky progression leading to end organ damage which is already irreversible when recognized. "DM begins to damage the cardiovascular system even before it is diagnosed," Bill says. He explains that DM—like a terrorist in the night—silently damages all arteries, building atherosclerotic lesions and aneurysms (thinning and ballooning of the arteries). Perhaps as it may seem at the start, diabetes is a malignant disease. I remember him saying during my post-graduate days.

Early on, some may have borderline elevation of the blood sugar, a stage called prediabetes or impaired fasting glucose (IFG). Some may have normal fasting blood sugar (FBS) when taken before breakfast after a whole night of fasting but once they eat, the blood sugar then excessively. This is called post-prandial hyperglycemia or impaired glucose tolerance (IGT). So one should have a blood sugar test taken after a meal or sugar load (oral glucose tolerance test or OGTT) to detect the IFG level is normal.

Bill emphasizes that even IFG and IGT already put one at risk to develop damage to the arteries which can eventually lead to coronary complications. Early recognition and treatment is therefore imperative and this should be a concern of physicians of various specialties. "Treating a patient with impaired glucose tolerance and cures DM since he's recognized by many (medical) specialties," Bill says.

Researching priorities

DISCOVER

Maxine Santos Ballon

HOPEFUL CAN BE A GOOD thing. When faced with a deadline and a target goal however, falling back on tried-and-true methods, remembering why you're standing and looking and exploring their turned isn't such a bad idea.

This is the gist of a study addressing one of the reasons the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) declared mortality worldwide by 2015 may not be met—even as the noblest progress seen to prevent that outcome. Officers Penelope from the World Health Organization's Department of Child and Adolescent Health and Development led an international team of 15 researchers, including Bosch Olivares from the Research Institute of Tropical Medicine.

Good news

Nine years ago some 100 countries made a commitment to meet what the United Nations identified as 8 Millennium Development Goals by 2015. One of their ways to reduce the number of deaths in children under the age of 5 by two-thirds between 1990 and 2015. The good news is that this goal is still attainable—at least on some fronts among children under the age of 5, dropped below 16 million for the first time. According to the Millennium Development Goals Report released last March, though, the rate of childhood mortality to 37 nations will remain unchanged.

"We hope that our progress not be in vain," Dr. Olivares said. "One of the key areas to lack of knowledge on how to implement existing cost-effective interventions and on how to achieve greater coverage of those interventions in low-resource settings," the researchers wrote.

The solution, they added, is to analyze all possible research options thoroughly and then prioritizing them appropriately in terms of which ones can provide the maximum benefit if funded properly.

Penelope and the colleagues applied a priority-setting exercise developed by the Child Health and Nutrition Research Initiative, to one cause of childhood mortality: childhood diarrhea. Established in help countries meet several of the stated 2015 Goals, the CHNRI had previously found the continuing high rate of childhood mortality to how research projects were being funded. One example they cited was providing more funding if the disease researchers rather than studying how people receive the existing therapies.

Diarrhea kills some 2 million children under the age of 5 each year, according to the 1998 report of the childhood mortality rate. In a November 2008 report from the United States' Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, diarrhea caused by enteric disease kills half a million children under 5 years of age each year, and nearly 90 percent of them come from Africa and Asia. Most are due to diarrhea caused by the World Health Organization between 2001 and 2008, 40 percent of the cases which kids under the age of 5 have been hospitalized with diarrhea were caused by rotavirus infection.

134 questions

Penelope and his colleagues made a list of 134 questions based on research from herein that affect health and illness in the population; policies; improving outcomes; and developing new ones.

In light of the 2015 deadline and the criteria, Naimbot's team found that the top 10 percent of the 134 questions scored can to be evaluating, and possibly improving on existing cost-effective treatment such as oral rehydration salts, zinc supplement and exclusive breastfeeding. The researchers were also unsurprised to note that developing new treatments fell into the bottom 20 percent of the priority list.

The study was presented in the March 10 issue of the online journal PLoS Medicine.

Public told to get flu shot

By Charles E. Rubio

THE SO-CALLED FLU PEAK SEASON starts in June and lasts until around September. This is why this early health authorities are already urging those who haven't yet received a flu shot to get one.

"If you're looking for ways to stay well adds taking a fresh this summer, getting a flu shot is a quick, convenient and inexpensive way to protect you and everyone around you," advises Dr. Lyndon Lee Suy, program manager of the Department of Health's Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Diseases.

The doctor adds that many people do not realize that flu is not just a medical condition that could keep one bedridden for weeks. "It could kill, just like heart disease and cancer, especially for the very young, the elderly and those with weak immune system," he said.

Most effective

The flu shot is now the most effective method for preventing flu virus infection and its potentially severe complications.

But why rush to get the shot this early?

Explains Lee Suy: "It takes time after you get the flu shot before you are fully protected. However, if you are exposed in the flu during this period when your body is still building immunity, the vaccine could still make your illness less severe.

According to him, flu is so hard to prevent because its virus changes in undergoing mutation every year to year.

Each year, the World Health Organization tries to guess which strains found anywhere in the world are apt to circulate in this country in the next flu season. It then formulates a vaccine to protect against those strains.

"When they guess right, as is usually the case, the vaccine is more than 90 percent effective in healthy adults," Lee Suy informs.

Easily spread

The doctor adds that vaccination is needed because the flu virus is easily spread.

"You could easily catch the flu by breathing in droplets from coughs or sneezes. It is also spread when you touch a surface such as a doorknob or phone that has the virus on it, and then touch your own mouth, nose, or eyes. And even if you sneeze on your hand but touch a doorknob afterwards, the virus is there and you may transmit the virus to someone else," Lee Suy says.

And flu transmission can occur even before one actually have visible symptoms of the disease. Adults may be able to spread the virus a day before showing the symptoms and up to five days after symptoms have appeared. Children and people with weakened immune systems may be infectious and able to spread the virus for a much longer period.

Complications

Unlike a common cold, the flu may cause severe illness and life-threatening complications such as pneumonia (infection of the lungs), myocarditis (inflammation of the heart) and worsening of chronic bronchitis (inflammation of the lungs) in people at risk.

"Anyone at any age can have serious complications from the flu, but people at highest risk include those over the age of 65, children between 6 months and 5 years old, pregnant women in the second or third trimester of pregnancy during the flu season, anyone living in a long-term care facility, and those individuals of any age with chronic medical conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and kidney disease," Lee Suy enumerates.

The flu could be dangerous to these high-risk individuals, especially because of viral pneumonia, in which the flu virus itself spreads into the lungs, or secondary bacterial pneumonia, in which unrelated bacteria (such as pneumococci) attack their weakened defenses.

Lee Suy stresses that the need for public awareness should not be underestimated. "The world didn't want another 'pandemic' flu pandemic like happened between 1918 and 1919," he says.

"That event killed around 50 million worldwide, more death than World War I, and since then, remains an ominous warning to public health. No one knows when the next flu pandemic will happen but considering that more people are traveling than in the past, it makes it easier for diseases to spread quickly around the world," he warns.

BUSINESS

Indian BPO sees 20% growth in RP

By Abigail L. Hu

BUSINESS PROCESS OUTSOURCING firm Zonia Philippines Inc. expects to register a 20-percent growth over the next 12 months, as the company ramps up its operations.

The company, a subsidiary of an Indian BPO firm headquartered in the US, set up shop in the country last last August 2008.

Its services delivery center at the One World Square Building within the Bonifacio Global City could initially accommodate 300 seats.

While other industries are reeling from the effects of the recession, Zonia Philippines president and chief executive Jack Frykas says prospects for the company and the local BPO sector in general.

"At a firm, we anticipate our revenue growth to exceed 20 percent over the next 12 months, and our strategic expansion in Manila will play an important role in our company's growth," he said in a statement yesterday.

He added that Zonia in the Philippines would likely even surpass the projected BPO industry growth rate of 30 percent "by a **solid margin," due mainly to ramp-up activities** to be done over the next few months.

Zonia performs credit card and mortgage servicing services for its clients, as well as **accounts receivable management and** healthcare revenue cycle management.

The company was chosen as a site for expansion due mainly to the availability of competent English-speaking personnel and its attractive and competitive labor and infrastructure costs.

"The market is demanding a wider global footprint from current center providers, and the Philippines has developed into a tremendously successful destination for these services. The quality and abundance of the labor force is outstanding," Zonia venture center division senior vice president Chris Rydesk had earlier said.

Peso rise hobbled RP exports

By Michelle T. Remo

PRICE COMPETITIVENESS OF THE country's exports weakened in 2008 because of the relative strength of the peso against competing currencies, an added problem Filipino exporters had to contend with last year on top of the crisis-led decline in global demand for goods.

According to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the peso appreciated in real terms last year against corresponding currencies. Data showed that the real effective exchange rate (REER) of the peso stood at +102.2 percent against other Southeast Asian currencies, including won, baht, ringgit, rupiah and the Singapore, Hong Kong, and Taiwan dollars.

REER compares the movement of the peso dollar exchange rate with the movement of the other currencies against the US dollar. A positive REER means the peso's depreciation against the US dollar is slower than the weakening of the other currencies against the US dollar.

Exporters are adversely affected when the peso registers a positive REER against competing currencies. This is because a stronger peso makes Philippine-made goods more expensive and therefore less competitive in terms of price.

While economists largely blame the global weakening of consumption appetite for the drop in the Philippines exports last year, they also said the relatively strong peso was partly responsible for it.

The National Statistics Office earlier reported that the country's exports fell nearly 3 percent year-on-year to $49 billion. This reversed the 8.4-percent rise in export income in 2007.

The peso averaged at 44.47 against the US dollar last year, stronger by 3.8 percent than the 46.15 recorded the previous year. Analysts said the appreciation would not have been much of a problem for exporters had the competing currencies kept pace with the peso's rise against the US dollar.

Pulling exports last year prompted calls for the government to peg the peso at a fixed exchange rate that will make locally made goods more price competitive. But the BSP stood firm on its policy to keep the peso's value at market-determined levels.

Meralco chairperson Eric Recto (2009, in line with its environmental conservation and preservation advocacy, the Manila Electric Company (Meralco) declared its full support for Earth Hour 2009, a global environmental campaign against global warming headed by the WWF-Philippines (World Wide Fund For Nature). The campaign calls for the massive switching off of lights throughout the country from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. on March 28, 2009. Meralco chairperson Recto (left) and Meralco CEO and President Oscar Reyes (right) switch off the lights in the Meralco Multimedia Center in Ortigas Center, Pasig City, as Meralco employees in their offices and across within the franchise area and Metro Manila in the morning of the simultaneous switch-off. Meralco also donated P500,000 to aid the campaign. Present for the unveiling of the donation are (from left) Meralco SVP and Marketing Program Head Belinda P. Deoja, Meralco EVP and Corporate Marketing Head Miguel C. Lopez, Meralco President and COO Jose F. de Jesus, WWF-Philippines Vice Chairman and CEO Jose Ma. Lorenzo Yap and Earth Hour National Director Hadrew Soto.

Meralco supports Earth Hour Philippines 2009

The Manila Electric Company (Meralco) today declared its full support for Earth Hour 2009, a global environmental campaign calling for serious and sustained action on global warming. As an expression of support for the cause, the campaign urges people from all walks of life to turn off essential lights from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. on March 28, 2009, Saturday.

Other organizations representing civil society, the business community, the religious sector, the youth, national agencies and local governments have likewise extended their support for this event.

Meralco Vice President and Corporate Marketing Head Miguel Lopez said, "Along with other corporate sectors, Meralco will participate in this momentous hour by switching off all the lights in the company's head office, business centers, extension offices and sectors within the franchise area."

Earth Hour Philippines 2009 hopes to involve 10 million Filipinos and 500 businesses in key cities across the country. Globally, it aims to reach one billion people in 1,000 cities all over the world.

Meralco is known for practicing and programs that promote the care of the environment. These include the collection of used batteries, tree planting projects, and the intensive promotion of energy efficiency.

Lopez added, "We hope that in our own little way we will be able to help create awareness on the need to protect the environment and to encourage other people to do their part to support this cause.

PROPERTY

Developers bullish on RP despite slowdown

By Charles E. Bolan

EVEN IF IT'S NOT going to turn very positive, the country's developers are nevertheless thankful that home building has never been negative for the Philippine economy.

"In the United States, people are scared to make big transactions, especially a house purchase. American home buyers could not be enticed back even with a glut of housing stock and a free bill to pilots there," declared Roman Cheu, national president of the Subdivision and Housing Developers Association, the Philippines' largest organization of housing developers.

During the recent oath taking of SHDA's new set of officers, Cheu said Filipino home buyers, unlike their counterparts elsewhere in the world, are not saddled by worries about the economy.

Past experience

"We have our past experiences with the currency and financial crisis in 1997 taught us a thing or two on how to deal with the current situation," Cheu said.

And so far, the results seem encouraging.

"SHDA in general and the several policy factors like favorable real estate industry, for example, the substantial allocation of P50 billion by the Pag-ibig Fund in addition to the funds that are available through private banks as well as the guarantees provided by the government to housing loans through the Home Guaranty Corp.," SHDA chair Eduardo Morato said.

The trend favoring Pag-Ibig has been going up from P30 billion in 2004 to P25 billion in 2008 and to P50 billion in 2009.

According to Morato, this trend is good news considering that at this time of global financial crisis, the country needs to put funds in industries that would stimulate the economy and create more jobs for more Filipinos.

Supported

"Housing should be supported considering this is one sector with a big multiplier effect on the economy. Each million invested in housing translates to P16.8 million in economic activity/sales," Morato said during the oath-taking ceremony held at the Discovery Suites in Ortigas City.

The oath taking of SHDA new officers was presided by Met Presidents Neil de Castro who also chairs the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, a major partner of SHDA in all its advocacy.

"Through our partnership approach, SHDA has served as a primary representative not only of our members but also of developers in general, in dealing with the government and several of its housing arms and of course, private firms that deal with the housing sector," Cheu explained.

Witnessed

In fact, De Castro during the ceremony at-

HOME/B2-1

Sysco dream homes packages launched

THE COLINAS MORES RESIDENTIAL Estates and Country Club, a joint venture partnership among Sta. Lucia Realty Developments, Amaseia Properties Inc. and exclusive marketing arm Orchard Property Marketing Corp., recently launched the Sysco Dream Homes house and lot packages.

The Sysco Dream Homes packages is a result of a partnership with Sysco Dream Development Corp. homes. The homes are made of seismic resistant precast wall panel and slab assembly that are sturdy enough for a multistorey building. They are also economical, durable and have a 10-year structural warranty.

Located in San Jose del Monte, Bulacan, Colinas Verdes sits on a 202-hectare property that is strategically located in Tungkong Mangga, the most developed and progressive area in San Jose del Monte.

Future developments in Colinas Verdes include a country clubhouse, hotels, villas and a commercial center.

Is your city child-friendly?

WE'VE HEARD OF PEDESTRIAN-friendly cities, disabled-friendly cities and bicycle-friendly cities. What about child-friendly cities? The fact that people are not even aware of it probably means people assume that our cities are child-friendly.

Take your typical fast-food restaurant. Most of them provide playgrounds for children. What about department stores, with their dizzying array of clothing, toys and devices all meant for children? They all give the impression that our communities are children-friendly.

In reality it is disturbing to learn that many of the world's cities are extremely hostile to children's most basic needs and are anything but child-friendly, and that includes Metro Manila.

We are lucky that our population pyramid is heavy to the ages of infancy and childhood. There is more room that we should make our cities child-friendly. Truly, children are a sign of God's faith in humankind.

GREEN ARCHITECTURE

Armando ale Arcega

Child-friendly city

What do we mean when we say that a city or community is child-friendly? It is a city that aims to meet children's need for exercise, draws on and safe open spaces for running, playing and interacting with other children.

The world is adult-oriented and children's opportunity to play with other children is quite limited to the school environment. We seem to forget that children develop their creativity, maximize dexterity, social skills and emotional sensitivity through play.

In some developed countries today, parents just push a tray of food through the door of the child's room because the child is too least of the computer soon to eight hours every day especially during summer vacation.

Another story

What the child learns from the computer is quite another story. It definitely takes away time to interact with persons and limits the child's growth in emotional intelligence and intellectual exchange with other persons. But he obtains information-depth from the computer, but there is no substitute for discussion.

And yet if the child lives in a condominium building, what choice does he/she have given a very small garden amenity in the building, and security issues?

It is now a well-known fact that children's stress levels are significantly affected when their mom has a view of trees.

Another concern is bullying in many schools. Manila was rated years ago as the bullying capital in Southeast Asia, with double the number of bullied children than in Singapore or Kuala Lumpur in a survey done with parents.

Are the lack of play opportunities and the excessive use of computers the reasons for aroused stress and antisocial behavior in children?

A CITY must operate that is clean, safe and inexpensive will dramatically decrease the number of cars on the road. Efficient transportation links near residential areas will also help calm traffic.

CHILDREN develop their creativity, maximize dexterity, social skills and emotional sensitivity through play.

Traffic-calming measures to green cities have a positive impact on child play. Ninety percent of the residents of Freiburg, the greenest city in the world, live in 30-km-per-hour residential areas.

Their parking buildings are located away from their houses and this makes the place very safe and conducive to play for children.

Streets are designed with landscaped curves to make motorists slow down. Bicycle paths and natural reserve areas are plentiful and promote unclogged living.

Young people are given a place to proactive cooperatives in their districts. The young are involved in energy-saving and ecology awareness activities.

A clean, safe and inexpensive city mass system will dramatically decrease the number of cars on the road. Efficient transportation links close to residential areas will also help calm traffic. Many say a city is as good as its transportation system.

Let's use that for us in downtown Manila is how drives the vulnerable level? A big chunk of carbon emissions come from vehicular traffic. Also, while many suffer from lack of clean water, broken water pipes are major challenges as are inconsiderately fixed and give passersby a feeling of helplessness and disunity.

Let us look at our urban development also from the perspective of the needs of growing children. A healthy and balanced urban climate not only for adults but for children as well, is now a greater challenge in the context of changing climate.

For comments or inquiries, e-mail armadale.fesar@gmail.com

McKinley Hill Cyberpark enjoys fast BPO office uptake

THE TWIN towers of 2 and 3 World Square are now fully operational, making McKinley Hill Cyberpark a fast-rising business and IT park.

MCKINLEY HILL, CYBERPARK CONTINUES to attract a good number of BPO firms and multinationals, according to its developer, Megaworld Corp.

Among the prominent new locates at McKinley Hill are: Stellar Infotech, Calgary Technology Philippines, IDS Media, Hewlett-Packard, Accenture, Holcim, Ingram Micro, Safeway and Transcontinental Logistik.

The intense activity at McKinley Hill Cyberpark has made it a fast-rising business district. Megaworld's president, the strong-willed upstake of McKinley Hill Cyberpark to its building being designed according to the locators' specific needs and the latest eco-spec spaces.

Jeroldo Do, FVP for Business Development of Megaworld Corp., said the commitment to identify and deliver their locators' requirement is embedded in the company's dynamic. He further recognized the importance of the OMO sector in keeping the Philippine economy resilient amid the global financial meltdown.

"We are optimistic that the BPO sector will continue on its growth path, and with the optimism goes Megaworld's commitment to sustain its role as a major catalyst by delivering more prime office spaces and locations that are attuned to the industry's particular requirements. McKinley Hill Cyberpark is one such location," he said.

The BPO sector is targeting up to 20-percent growth this year and is confident of achieving its original 20 GO goal of adding to 4 (0 billion in revenues. The sector also seeks to hire 13 0,000 more employees this year to increase its total workforce to 980,000.

Ayden, Megaworld-owned to build two BPO buildings per year in its prime locations such as McKinley Hill Cyberpark in Fort Bonifacio.

This year, the Philippines' undisputed leader in BPO office and residential building development, is delivering a lot more than its commitment to the industry.

6 new buildings

Megaworld is targeting to finish six new buildings this year in McKinley Hill Cyberpark alone: the 8, 10, 18, and 20 Upper McKinley Road towers, the 6 Park Avenue building 6, and the Commerce and Industry Plaza.

"There are new buildings slots rapidly been rising Megaworld's commitment to it accelerate further the growth of the BPO industry in the country," he declared.

Megaworld's 30-hectare mixed-use township development in Fort Bonifacio that simplifies the live-work-play-learn concept that Megaworld champions for its integrated, modern development in the Philippines.

Its up economic zone accredited by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, locators at McKinley Hill Cyberpark have been enjoying tax and other fiscal incentives for over a year now. New locators will enjoy the same privileges as well.

Green Meadows in Tarlac

a true refuge to the din of the city

A BUSTOP, road in Pampa right outside of Green Meadows subdivision

Ditto the way to Paniqui a fresh seafood restaurant called Subaan Floating Restaurant famous for its Tocinigo-wali

STA. LUCIA endorser and a fan of Paniqui's counterpoint charter, Pops Fernandez

PINEWOOD Place offers a genuine tropical environment with resilient landscaping and a curvilinear tree-lined drive.

Magnolia Place tropical haven in QC

DMCI HOMES IS DEVELOPING A MEDIUM-rise residential property in Southern Quezon City. The project site, an irregularly shaped 3.2-hectare property, is located on Tandang Sora Avenue. Its location, making it accessible to important institutions. It also has a quiet neighborhood and a unique character that would put a soul into the community and its future inhabitants.

From this concept, Magnolia Place was born, with construction currently on track and in full swing. The aptly named development would span a property that follows the contour of a sweeping river—with a lot of interesting twists and surprises at every bend.

Living close to nature

"According to Gmelk, there is no straight line in nature—it was actually that premise that inspired us to create something beautiful that is in harmony with nature," said Lorenzo Rueda, DMCI Homes project development manager. "The unique shape of the lot evoked an organic theme, so from there, we came up with the concept of transforming the land itself as a means to create unexpected interactions and viewpoints. Our theme will be a tropical oasis, with lots of emphasis on the landscaping as an essential feature of the development through colorful flowers and vines throughout the property."

Wherever they turn, residents will feel like they are living close to nature and far from the city, according to Rueda. This proposition indeed has already attracted a number of buyers. It is around the area where relos are upgrading to a condo home. DMCI Homes is also fulfilling its commitment to provide residents of Northern Quezon City a chance to live in a home that opens up to refreshing forested gardens and parks, expansive inspiration and relaxation in every residence.

Once completed, Magnolia Place will emerge as the only medium-rise development that offers a genuine tropical environment with resilient landscaping for young and growing families with modest incomes.

Impressive attributes

Ms. Sonnie Sioson, DMCI Homes landscape manager, discussed the impressive attributes of the project's landscape layout and design concept: "Upon entering the property, residents will be welcomed by a tastefully adorned curvilinear tree-lined drive which is lined with palm trees. It features a two-lane runway, walkways and special street paving which is perfectly complemented by a wide variety of flowering shrubs and colorful planting strips in its entire stretch."

Surrounding the residential buildings will be amenity areas such as the clubhouse and basketball courts and three types of themed gardens: the Rock Garden which will taste with boulders, pebble-and-stone for foot therapy and rock wall features; the Hanging Garden with cascading vines; the Earth Garden, landscaped areas with earth mounds of different heights covered with grass for children to climb and roll on; and the Pine Garden, a park with a tree-lined avenue of pine trees, a grassy landscape with seating areas made of wood stumps.

Indeed, Magnolia Place is set to blossom as a community surrounded by inspiration.

Home . . .

First page B1

on witnessed the signing of an agreement that HDH entered into with Crown and Holmes, two of the country's largest restaurant makers.

"We went able to negotiate with these two companies, to have their rentals price locked for one year. This is below the market price agreement and is exclusive only to our active members," Chua explained.

He added that such memorandum of agreement would help HDH's active members, especially those with projects in far-off locations in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Welcomed

The news was also welcomed by the Organization of Subdivision Housing Developers of the Philippines, wherein a number of its developers are also HDH members.

"Our organization partnered with HDH to convince HUDCC to adjust the loan ceiling for socialized housing from P500,000 to P600,000," OSHDP president Linda Tan reported.

She added that such increased loan allowance will give their members, who are concentrating on socialized housing projects, the chance to construct bedding houses as they are assured that there will be takers out.

The OSHDP seeks to other similar organizations counterparts, formers primarily on socialized housing developments, which is choosing unit that costs no more than P400,000.

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Phinma condo units in prime spot sell for less than P1M

By Tess R. Salazar

A WAGE EARNERS CONdominium but with qualities fit for a metropolitan top executive: a New Metro Manila-based developer Phinma Properties is molding all its projects.

Fresh from its condo project Dasmariñas Towers situated near the old Nasa airport that sees families P677,000 for a typical 30-square-meter (2m-broad floor-max P948,000), a new seven-storey condominium Sofia Bellevue will soon be built on Capitol Hills Drive, Old Balara, Quezon City, in front of Capitol Hills Golf and Country Club (a few meters away from the University of the Philippines Diliman, Ateneo De Manila University and Miriam College). Its first building of 300 units is set to finish within the year. The total project will finish in 2010.

Sofia Bellevue, designed to have an elevator, will charge a monthly association dues of P80 per sq m per month from future owners.

The unit-size are 25, 36 and 48 sq m expandable up to 120 sq m.

For the project proponent, the condo price, together with the association dues, is a steal, for where else could there be a project that offers 50 percent more of the floor area for the same price in the competitor?

"At a per-sqm basis, the Sofia Bellevue costs P41,000. Our competition nearby peg the price of their condo units at P55,000. On a per-unit basis, Sofia Bellevue condo units range from P981,000 to P1 million. Our competitor's floor sizes are often 20 sq m smaller for P1.2 million and their features are relatively the same," noted Willie Ee, Phinma Properties president and CEO.

Ee reveals that for this particular project, 17 hectares had been earmarked for the development of 870 units in five buildings.

Sofia Bellevue targets families with combined monthly incomes of at least P30,000. The monthly amortization for a unit here, Ee estimates, could be as low as P8,918 monthly (for 25 years for a 25-sqm studio if Pag-Ibig loan is worth P750,000; if full loan value, P9,088 per month for 25 years).

The lowest-priced unit at Sofia Bellevue is P900,000 (for a 25-sqm unit), while a 36-sq-m unit will cost P1.47 million.

Gyan Orbeta, vice president for marketing and design of Phinma Properties, says: "We developed the studies because the schools—Miriam, Ateneo and UP—are there, plus the 'BF' Technopark employees. There's a growing market of individuals who want to live exported (from their families). Even if some of them are not qualified with their salaries, Pag-Ibig allows them to combine their salary with their immediate kin."

Uy stresses that Phinma projects have a strict "shelf" test. "If foundation doesn't pass the standard, this means it could affect the structural integrity of the whole building. We destroy the whole thing and rebuild again."

SUPER LIFESTYLE

LOST IN TRANSIT

Paolo R. Reyes

UpDharmaDown music video nominated in international indie awards Aviima 2009

Light duty

THEY DIDN'T NEED any industrial light or magic for this one, and George Lucas himself would probably agree.

But to make UpDharmaDown's "Tayo" music video—which is nominated for Most Mind Blowing Video at the 2009 Asia Voice Independent Music Awards (Aviima) in KL, Malaysia, tomorrow—they did maybe over 5,000 pieces kapagitan, countless LED flashlights, and an obscene amount of colored cellophane for it.a decidedly low-tech project to see, well, the light of day.

Using stop-motion/time-elapse photography to write and draw with different light

CONTINUED ON P2

Ian Magno, Carlos Tatlonia, Paul Yap and Armel Millare of UpDharmaDown in their MYX-MA-nominated video "Tayo"

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In life everything is unpredictable, thus the saying "Don't count your chickens until they've hatched". But what if there is a GUARANTEE, a PROMISE, a COMMITMENT . . . Can you start counting?

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STRIP TEASE Below: shots from the making of the music video, which used crop-rotation photography, countless LED flashlights and over 5,000 photographs

Light duty

From page C1

sources, young director Alexis Reyes and his United DIC productions team achieved the impossible task by dubbing "retro" and getting against the CGI movement gods.

"In this age of special effects, I felt the best way to move forward was to take a step backwards, using child-focused photography and manual light graffiti animation," says the 24-year-old filmmaker, who is set to become director of United Productions, where he has spearheaded TVCs for Dunkin Donuts, Colgate, San Miguel Beer and the Philippine Red Cross (the "Dare to Aid" campaign featuring Sitsay Aquino, Lea Salonga and Basti Gutierrez).

"The idea came to a sort of eureka moment while I was in Tokyo last May and saw a group of artists 'light painting' for a video installation project," shares Reyes, whose AVIMA-nominated video will face stiff competition from India, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand and four fellow Pinoy nominees—Taken by Cars, MRS and Uni of Bed's Special—during announcements awards show Launch a nation via www.avima.org).

"Pulling it off was ambitious, to say the least," he adds, before illuminating hopes on the laborious details that months of intense planning, three experimental test shoots, and the sleepless nights of production around the streets of QC, Makati, Ortigas and San Pillas. "All the effects were done live and on camera. This gave the video a very raw, choppy feel that blended perfectly with the song."

What immediately strikes you after viewing "Save" isn't so much the technical skill by which it was creatively cobbled together—but how the lights, in all its neon, hand-painted glory, takes on a Pixar-perfect life of its own: hollow pink hearts that implode into flowing musical notes; fine-weave fibers of rain that drizzle from Crayola-green clouds; or tentacle-like doodles that slither around your TV screen like gossamy worms gone wild.

"The lights, you see, are the music in physical form—they're like these lights stylized sound waves," says Reyes, who utilized a similar style for the Up (Bartimaeus) first single, "Maybe," where he played with the idea of stark silhouettes against dancing stage lights. "They are, if you haven't noticed, the main characters of the story."

Still, about light constraints

Cast your online vote for Save over LAVIMA 2008 Awards at www.wp/awards.php. Watch LCDS "Save" at the MuchMusic.com Festival of Video in the country's first internal TV site.

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Nyctinasty

in the 'onset of darkness'

Independent Artists Club gets wider reach

NYCTINASTY

MADONNA WAS AMONG THE FIRST artists to use the Internet as an effective tool to spread her addictive pop beats by making her own website to counter her beyond "American Idol," Alexis Jazz, artists such as Sean Kingston, Cassie, Jaimie Foxx and Lily Allen have followed in her footsteps, and used their own websites or social networking sites to push their music.

The Internet is a godsend especially for indie bands that want to reach more people, indie bands are the diamonds in the rough—they sound amazing and you really want to every gig. Thanks to Solaris Independent Artists Club (IAC), these artists can now share their music with a wider audience.

This week, Sugar, with Nikka Hizon's IAC, asks Nyctinasty's Noodle Perez, Ike Correia, Lee Reyes and Mikko Cano about their music.

How did you come up with the band name?

Noodle: I got it from class where the teacher was discussing botany and the movements of plants. Nyctinasty means the circadian rhythmic leaf movements of higher plants in response to the onset of darkness.

Lee: It's a metaphor for our band's place in the music scene. The "onset of darkness" represents the music industry's neglected minds. But we still aim to enlighten people that Filipino musicians can still provide the most creative, exciting and still responsive songs people can listen to.

How long have you been a band?

Noodle and Ike started the group with other male members. The old-female line-up started in 2006.

How would you describe your band's music?

It's a fusion of varied influences—emo, punk and pop. The band draws its different kinds of music with a common denominator of enjoying melodic, melodic music.

Which music influences your own?

Noodle and Lee: Colored and Genesis, Bolts, Paloma the Well, Nine, Death Cab for Cutie.

What music do you listen to all the time?

We appreciate almost all types. Impromptu discoveries mixed. We usually have 500 music on our playlist because it feels good when we try to look back and listen to the songs we grew up with.

What is on your music playlist?

Lee: Dad City, The Rise of Silence, The Postal Service, Between the Buried and Me, The Ambassador.

Ike: Lamb of God, Bolts, American Football, Underworld.

Noodle: Adam Kang Fu Generation, Christopher Mitchell, Mew City and Colored, Dio Atlantis Kid.

Mikko: Lamb of God, Enemies, Between the Buried and Me, The Prophet, Cydia, Mae.

Where can your fans musically seek you?

Ok. March 14, we will be at Mag-Ink Nightstreet, Tagaig, for Sonic Shock, and Ami Magazine Malaysia will be giving us an award for Best Breakthrough Artist in Asia. And we are excited about the Summer Slam Live April 30 at Amusement Station. This is our first time to play before a huge rock crowd.

How else can people catch your band?

For a complete list of our gigs, they can visit www.myspace.com/nyctinasty or www.reverbnation.com/nyctinasty. Or log on to nyctinasty.multiply.com.

To know more about Solaris IAC and to sample the best indie bands the country has to offer, log on to www.solaris.com.ph, Inc. Download your favorite tracks and make your own indie playlist in your Nokia 5800 XpressMusic, InMotion mobile phone for a convenient device. With its 8 GHD internal memory and RDS tuner memory card, you have space for approximately 5,000 songs! Share the music via the phone's built-in speakers, which was recently awarded the Best Speaker Quality by Urmark Testing agency Delta.

Want more music? You can also download 500 more indie tracks and videos for free from the Universal Music website, and surf the Internet via Ambient Access for two months.

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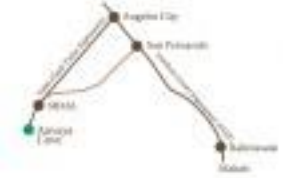

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And you can spend time with him today too

Text by Pura Pacho
Photos by Jill Lejano

BY THE TIME YOU READ this, Craig David's Manila concert will be over. He would have performed songs from his "Greatest Hits" album at the Araneta Coliseum and fans would have danced and screamed until their throats were sore.

But if you missed his show, it's not too late. You can spend time with him at the concert at the Glorietta 5 Atrium where he will be signing autographs at 4 p.m.

Super was lucky to get some one-on-one time with the R&B singer-songwriter from England the day before the concert.

We're pissed he's here for a few days?

Yes. I wish I can get out so I could see Manila. It would be a shame to come out to a place and not see the city. I'm very lucky to have a great Filipina friend in Japan. She cooks some great food...some traditional food. She sure really excited because she was saying how her family and her friends are coming to the show.

How hard was it to choose which songs to include in your "Greatest Hits" album?

Sir (sent through) so many songs and I got to a point where I mean, you know what, we can put B-sides or all these other or try to come up with something clever but if it's called "Greatest Hits," it's got to have the greatest hits in it.

Do you have a favorite song from this album?

"Fill Me In." It's a special song to me. It's the first song that really got people into my music.

What was it like hitting number one on the UK charts at 19?

One: it was overwhelming. Two, I took it in stride. It was the start of a whole new life for me. I never thought I would travel to so many countries and that my music would touch so many people around the world.

GET Will autograph today.

How has fame changed you?

It has changed me for the better. It opened my eyes to things I had never seen before. I never people I never would have met before. The only downside to fame is that you're constantly in the view of the media and it's like you need to your guard down. You just gotta be careful. But you gotta live life at the same time.

What else do you want to do?

I wanna make another media album. You never know what song is going to connect to someone, what song is gonna change someone's world. You're always one song away from having the biggest worldwide smash hit song ever.

How do you relax?

I have some good people, good friends around me. It doesn't matter where we go, we always have a lot of fun. I'm a big believer of that. The energy is what makes the party.

If you weren't doing this, what would you be doing now?

I would have told my DJing would have taken off and that I would have traveled on going around the world playing other people's music. Me singing and nothing songs changed my entire life. I have no idea where else I would be. I wouldn't be in the Philippines now, that would be a fix, for sketch.

What was it like working with Sting?

Sting was someone I grew up listening to. I found myself thinking, "How am I in the studio with this guy?" Sting was in the vocal booth, I was behind the desk making the instrument and talking to him. Yes, it's not like that, can you change it a little bit?" I was talking [illegible] to sing the song—it was quite bizarre. I'm not trying to underplay him in any way, he's a living legend. But he was very cool and modest and down to earth.

What one people expect from your live shows?

I always feel that people compliment me on the fact that it actually travels better live than it does on the record. When you're in a studio, you're trying to sing perfectly and you're thinking about things—make a lot. When you're on stage, it's a emotional connection with the crowd. I feel I give a better performance onstage.

The special edition CD+DVD Philippine release of Craig David's "Greatest Hits" Album is released by Warner Music Philippines and includes a DVD of his hit music videos.

Ayala Malls Livelihood

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2b LIFESTYLE

UP Diliman is the scene of spine-tingling reports of ghost sightings and urban legends

Ghosts on campus

By Catherine Grace de Leon

"I ONCE ASKED A FRIEND WHY MOST people feared ghosts more than werewolves, crawling, diamalas, aliens and reincarnators.

"Well," he answered. "It's because they're supposed to be dead."

The UP College of Music at the Abelardo Hall has a curfew. At 6 in the evening, the bell will ring and all who are still inside must exit the building before the guard locks it down. This was not always so. Years ago, people could stay in as long as they wanted. This one, we Music majors are addicted to practice. We'll pretend many an our instruments until 3 in the morning if we could. So understandably, many of us were disgruntled when the 6 p.m. rule was first imposed.

Several weeks ago, we were talking to one of our professors, also a Music alumna, expressing envy at how lasting her time she could stay in the college and practice to her heart's content way into the night.

"You're right, we didn't have an official curfew then," she replied. "Instead, we had what we called a musical curfew. Once you start to hear someone playing, singing, or dancing along to your solitary music . . . Ay! Umuwi ka na!"

And every until now, many janitors claim that sometimes they hear passionate piano playing in one of the classrooms, but when they go to check it out, they find no one there.

They also say that in the gamelan room, the biggest gong in the ensemble (gong ageng) vibrates by itself at 12 midnight. And it must be true because every janitor we've interviewed to have its own identity and to be inhabited by spirits whom you must not offend—which is why you must treat the instruments with care and never step over them, or you will never have children of your own.

Several piano professors also claim that there's a little girl who wanders around the second floor of the new building at night, especially if you're the only one left practicing in the premises.

Jeepney stories

It was late at night when a man waved his hand to the driver and got on the jeep. The driver wondered why the man chose to stand on the edge and cling on to the rails, and asked him why he wouldn't just take a seat. Just as the man was about to answer that the vehicle was full of passengers, he realized it was actually empty.

Another tale was that of a girl who got on the jeepney by herself. All of a sudden, the driver veered away from the regular route into unknown territory. Driving through dark and unpopulated areas, he kept glancing consciously at the girl over his shoulder.

The girl started to fear for her life and seriously dig any (what if he planned to rape her?) and requested that she be dropped off at her dorm. In time the jeepney returned to regular route and she was dropped off in front of her building.

But before taking off, the driver said, "Miss, as soon as you get inside, take off your clothes and burn them. Remember when I saw your reflection in the rear view mirror, you were headless." He also said that was the reason he took several unusual turns...because he feared the girl's untimely demise lay in the jeepney's regular course.

Vinzons Hall

At Vinzons Hall, it was the end of the semester, and a guy was waiting for his friend to meet him. Since the first floor was quite busy and crowded with students celebrating semifinals, he went up to the second floor, which was empty of people and quite peaceful, and started to read a book—a pleasure he had been deprived of during finals week.

All of a sudden, he heard a woman softly gasp for breath from the men's comfort room. A few minutes later his friend walked out...and he asked him if he had heard anything. His friend said no, and laughed as he became frustrated for imagining things.

Before they left, the guy decided to relieve himself in one of the cubicles. After some time he felt someone patting and smoothing his head. He looked up and saw a girl hanging from her neck, her complexion gray from the lack of oxygen, and her eyes almost bulging out of their sockets. And grazing his head were the soles of her feet! He hurriedly ran out with his zipper still unclosed, and he never used that comfort room again.

Dorm stories

At the Sampaguita dorm, a student was brushing her teeth when a woman suddenly appeared in the mirror behind her. In fright, she turned to face the mirror, and the lady calmly prayed it along with her.

Another student was washing her face, and when she looked up to the mirror with her face still covered in soap suds, she saw her reflection smiling back at her. She hurriedly ran out and closed her face with mineral water.

Some dormers also claimed that while taking a shower, a black presence with red eyes peeped at them.

Benitez Hall

Of all the colleges rumored to be haunted at UP, the College of Education is the most notorious and contro-

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HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DANAO

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a bright, enthusiastic personality that lights up any room. You charm has a part of nonsense. People like you. Since you are very adventurous, you have a tendency to get into trouble. Especially during your 20s. Since you are very adventurous, you have a tendency to get into trouble. Especially during your 20s. Since you are very adventurous, you have a tendency to get into trouble. Especially during your 20s.

Birthstone of: Rose Quartz, Jade, Pearl, Moonstone, Aquamarine, Chrysoberyl, Opal

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): What a different day it has been for you! You're feeling fabulous and unstoppable. People notice you and you love being noticed. Enjoy every minute of it.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is the perfect day to make plans for a grand celebration. Invite your friends and family and they will go well. Enjoy beauty in your surroundings.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 to Dec. 21): An intellectual encounter will be a lot of fun today. Be curious and enjoy romantic flirtations. Your mind is open to new ideas and information, and you will be creative and productive and go with an adventurous mood. It's a good day to discuss new ventures.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Any kind of romantic activity is favored today. Be open to possibilities and don't hesitate to express your love to someone you've been fantasizing about. It's a good day for meditation or contemplation.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is a good day to discuss shared property. Try to avoid indecisiveness or last feelings that negative fears could overtake you.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You're a good day to socialize, and you will be creative, productive and go with an adventurous mood. It's a good day to discuss new ventures.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Communications, both written and creative, people will always say today. You feel you're in the role of things, and you love it. You're also more optimistic about your future.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Relations with partners, and especially business partners, are favored today. You handle here want feelings to the yes, and they do for you as well. Get assistance from close friends.

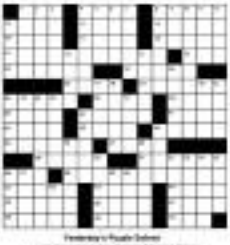
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You can make progress from your close associations today. Work on an important way to reach out, write, market, sell or verbally influence with an open mind.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Some of you might decide a crush on your boss today or someone you've been seeing quite social. People look upon you today with very favorable eyes.

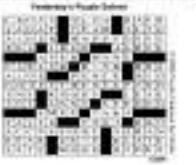
SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Co-workers are an unusually helpful and supportive today. All diverse plans related to your job will bring good feelings as well as promote future earnings.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): This is a good day for business and commerce. Financial discussions with partners and co-workers are favored. Trust your inner sensing about. Trust your inner thing for beautiful things for yourself and loved ones.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Freestanding or Regular Solution



CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

			8		3		4	
		2						5
	9				1			
9				3		6		7
			6		9			
7		5		1				9
			5				2	
8						4		
	3		1		2			

Difficulty Level ★★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

1	4	3	7	2	5	6	9	8
2	8	6	9	3	4	7	5	1
7	9	5	1	8	6	4	2	3
8	5	9	6	4	3	1	7	2
6	7	2	5	9	1	3	4	9
3	1	4	2	7	9	5	8	6
5	6	8	4	1	2	9	3	7
4	3	7	6	5	8	2	1	4
9	2	1	3	6	7	8	6	5

Difficulty Level ★★★★

THE SPEAKS

LIVE AT SM NORTH EDSA TODAY

MEMBERS of the Speaks

A young, talented, and charismatic five-piece band from the Washington, DC area- The Speaks are shattering stereotypes, making believers out of naysayers, and acquiring legions of new fans every single step along the way. From winning every major music competition they've entered, to rocking crowds of 20,000+ people, and gaining major support from DC101 (one of the most influential radio stations in the country) - The Speaks have become a staple of the DC metro area and one of the most recognizable and down to earth talents to come out in years.

In a changing new world where music seems to be erasing any existing racial boundaries, The Speaks -- with several members who are all American-born, but of Asian heritage - are poised to further prove that music is, indeed, the one true "universal language." The Speaks are opening people's minds and broadening people's horizons with their driven, emotionally charged music in a unique, unprecedented package. Industry people and numerous fans are saying they are the next big thing! Find out why! Catch them at your favorite SM Supermall - March 28, 6PM at The Annex of SM City North Edsa, March 29, 5PM at SM Fairview, April 3, 5PM at the Entertainment Plaza, SM City Cebu, April 4, 6PM at SM City Davao and on April 5, 5PM at the Main Mall Atrium, SM Mall of Asia.

THE SPEAKS with SM Executives

MEGAMALL
March 27 | 6PM
Event Center

SM city north edsa
March 28 | 6PM
4th floor, The Annex

SM city cebu
April 3 | 5PM
Entertainment Plaza

SM MALL OF ASIA
April 5 | 5PM
The Main Mall Atrium

SM SUPERMALLS
March 29 | 5PM
SM Fairview
April 4 | 6PM
SM City Davao

Ghosts on campus

Previous page D3

Curfew hour is haunted hour

vented, being the oldest building on campus.

A friend studied elementary and high school at the UP Integrated School, from which she and her friends had a full view of the College of Education. She told the story of a girl who committed suicide on the fourth floor. And on some nights they could see her jumping from the toilet bowl, and then vanishing before she hit the ground.

A new professor, who requested of me to be named, recounted how she was once having class when she noticed that two of her students at the back were not listening. Instead, they were whispering to each other and kept glancing towards the door. Irritated, she approached them after class and asked why they weren't listening to the discussion. And they answered that they saw a man in white watching her so he prayed through the door.

Asking around, they were advised to seek information from the librarians, who then convinced them to look at the board of past and present deans.

"There! That's him!" said the students, pointing to the picture of Dean Ibañez—the dean after whom the College of Education was named.

The librarians then explained that while Dean Ibañez was still alive, he would walk around and observe the new professors in their classes.

The next story I'm going to share has reached urban legend status. It has been told time and time again around UP, and none has several variations.

It was very late at night and raining too hard. A professor was the only one left in the College of Education, and she couldn't go home due to the heavy rains. The superproctor/the guard/and asked if she would stay in the building for some time, at least until the rain stopped. He generously obliged, but on several conditions.

He brought her to one of the rooms and instructed her to dim and lock the door. She was to stay inside the whole time until he came back to get her. Under no circumstances was she permitted to open the door unless she heard him knock. The professor agreed and the guard left her and returned to his post.

After some time, the professor heard footsteps outside the room. Someone was walking along the corridor. Approaching the door, she peeked through the keyhole. The footsteps had stopped and all she could see was the white veil. Just veil and nothing else. She stood back up, extremely curious as what she just saw. But heeding the guard's instructions, she chose not to open the door.

A few hours later, the security guard returned and knocked for her. She opened it and he said it was okay for her to come out now. She thanked him for his kindness, but couldn't keep herself from asking. Whose were those footsteps, and why was the view from the keyhole nothing but veil?

"Ah," the guard responded knowingly. Trying to soothe her, he revealed that there really was a ghost that would walk along the corridor at a certain hour every night. That was why he instructed her to stay inside the room and keep the door locked at all times. And that ghost, he continued, had big red eyes.

UP Infant Center

Students taking Family Life and Child Development (FLED) have a subject called Home Management. While taking it up, they are required to live in the Infant Center, which is reportedly haunted. Residents would wake up to find all the cupboards in the kitchen open. A guy also went to bed without a blanket, and when he woke up, he was snuggled up under one.

As one night, my friend, her classmates, and their professor were having a quiet dinner, when all of a sudden they heard the innocent sound of a baby's laughter.

Their eyes grew wide and they held their breath. After a moment of silence, their professor cautiously admitted, "Lifeplease de 'yan. Huhuhuhu."

Visit http://writer.inquirer.net/lifestyle to post comments and read more.

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Discover a great new development in photos with iPhoto '09

Experience the new features of iPhoto '09 as you take part in exciting activities happening at Apple Premium Reseller Stores this month!

Don't forget to bring your photos to any participating stores to learn how quick and easy it is to create your very own themed slideshows.

The best part is, you get to bring home a CD of your slideshow absolutely free!

No photos? No problem! You may come and have your photo taken in the store. You may also get a chance to interact with guest celebrity icon impersonators, have your picture taken with them and get a print of your photo instantly.

Meet and greet celebrity icon impersonators during these timeslots on all event days:

1:00PM-2:00PM / 5:00PM-4:00PM / 5:00PM-6:00PM / 7:00PM-8:00PM

Extensive and informative demos on iPhoto '09 await everyone! So come and join the series of events at the following stores on **March 28 and 29:**

- Digital Hub, Robinsons Place Ermita
- iStudio, Bonifacio High Street
- Power Mac Center, Greenbelt 3
- Power Mac Center, SM Megamall
- Switch, Alabang Town Center
- The A.Shop, The Podium

This event is also brought to you by Canon and Clickthecity.com.

digitalhub iStudio POWER MAC CENTER switch The A.Shop

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24/7 LIFESTYLE

Tips for hassle-free traveling

Bring Ziplock bags—you'll thank us for the suggestion

By Hiro Mark M. Sablan
Correspondent

YOU ARE ON YOUR LAST day in Boracay. It's time to leave, and you have a lot to bring home: accessories you bought at pasalubong for your friends, a couple of souvenir pieces you'll definitely use in your next vacation, plus that perfect shade of golden brown you yearned.

Oh, and one more thing—a little pile of very wet clothes drenched in that's lovely seawater. What to do? Hoping your hotel room for a plastic bag big enough to fit all your stuff, or awkwardly them and hope you still catch your flight? Or just leave them?

Traveling can be more enjoyable when it's hassle-free. Check this list first to remind you of the little things that can prevent any bumps your vacation there.

Use pailbelts for your check-in bags. You don't want to lose valuable stuff, or, worse, get unwanted items stuffed into your luggage. Don't forget to remember the code if you're using number combinations, or keep the key's (duuuh) here in mind, in a very safe place so you don't lose them.

Bring enough basic medicines such as painkillers, those for motion sickness and tummy aches. Getting sick during vacation is a total bummer, so make sure you have the means to address it right away. Insect repellants, Tiger Balm and Kaopectate can also be your best friend during the trip.

Don't bring your whole bathroom. Opt for sachets of your favorite brands, or just transfer them into little container that you can pack into your bags.

Unravel your ID cards with your life. It's up to you if you want to bring them with you all the time (and risk losing them while you're strolling). You may want to just leave them inside your resort's safety deposit box, but passport and bring photocopies as well.

Bring Ziplock bags. Resealable plastic bags are known most because they serve many purposes for travelers, apart from storing those wet clothes. They can be your container for spillables, such as gel sachets and shampoo in little bottles, so to prevent your clothes from being saturated with toothpaste or some other product. They can also protect your gadgets from mood and water.

Take an extra bag for stuff you can't pack inside your check-in luggage—or when you feel you'll end up with excess baggage.

Hook up on fully charged batteries and memory cards/sticks. One can never have enough of them, and you surely don't want to run out of memory or battery juice during your vacation.

Travel light. Not only will you have an easier time lugging your bags around, you'll also have lots of free space for all the cool stuff you'll end up buying. You can always expect some of your clothes, so buy new ones if there aren't any fresh ones anymore.

Lastly, when in a country where English is not widely spoken, keep table napkins, coasters or anything with the name of your hotel on it, so it's easier for your cab driver to bring you home.

Bon voyage!

E-mail the author at sinomarkus@yahoo.com

2BU SURVEY

What's the best lesson college has taught you?

Is MOOON CAFE a Mexican restaurant?

From a small, cozy corner of Guadalupe in Cebu 16 years ago, MOOON Cafe has steadily established itself as a fast-rising star in the Southern dining scene. The restaurant, which was originally founded by three UP Cebu Fine Arts graduates, has since revamped and refurbished by the Pagao family back in June 2007.

After purchasing the restaurant, the Pagao family—who also own Tibaldo Fresh Fruit Juices and Shakes and the Bright Academy School—renovated the two-story structure and reopened to positive responses from the Cebuano public. Geared to cook Mexican classic and with Iloilean savory added after cities Guadalajara, Vera Cruz, and Tijuana, MOOON Cafe's transformation into a dining place inspired by Mexico proved to be a key factor to its success; however, its success is not limited to Chimichangas and Tortillas. "Our menu is typically international but with more focus on Mexican fare," says Charlie Pagao, the young marketing head of Pagao Holdings, Inc. which operates the restaurant's operations.

One of the menu's highlights is the "Mooon Steak", a mouth-watering blast of pork that has become a customer favorite. Their extra-large Baby Back Ribs, scorching hot Pizza Diablo, sizzling Carnitas de Lomo and purple ube mooon are also must-eats.

Twelve months after giving the first MOOON Cafe a major facelift, a second outlet was launched at the Nustown 2 Park. Shortly thereafter a third branch was opened on December 8, 2008 at The Terraces in Ayala Center Cebu, the coveted premiere dining destination in the South.

As MOOON Cafe continues to expand—possibly in Manila and other key cities like Davao and Iloilo—it will take pride in being a homegrown restaurant from Cebu that is inspired by the wonders of Mexico.

Proud Partner of Unilever Food Solutions

MOOON Cafe is a proud partner of UNILEVER FOOD SOLUTIONS. For franchise inquiries, please contact Sonny Pagao at 09.173.16004 and (032) 416.1122 loc 101

Nina Mark M. Sabiniano
2BU Correspondent

Don't ever think you've prepared enough—anything can happen inside the classroom. If you think you've studied the right stuff the night before, and suddenly you need one of it's favorite professors. – Nanette Agudo, 23

In everything that I do, I should always give 100 percent, be it a simple or very elevated task. This guiding principle has made me a better person who will never be satisfied with mediocrity. – Kai Sawao, 20

Despite the never-ending papers and reports, don't ever forget to enjoy every detail of your life. You only live once. Live it well. – Erica Uy, 20

How to value every hour, minute and second that I have while I am still alive. Greatest process in today and don't ever to waste time for! – Shelyn Anquayan

Procrastination ruins anything from books and your profession. Procrastinate every thing you need through your experiences in life. Determine to have those experiences, you must be at least the point to do studying my things with your BU. – Don Montano, 18

Even when you don't believe, pretend you do. Just find certainty. It's not uncertainty. It's surviving the demanding world of college life. – Shelyn Hernandez, 21

What is the best lesson you learned in college? E-mail the author at ninamarksabiniano@yahoo.com

THE UP Diliman Council offers the notebook "Pamana."

A new online youth show

Now showing: the first-ever user-generated online youth show in the Philippines

By Ruby de Vera

CHECK out the Tsuperstreet website at www.tsuperstreet.com

YOU'VE PROBABLY SEEN IT ON YouTube or read it somewhere—200 people suddenly break inside Grand Central Station in New York City, the Mac U2 concert, and the MET experiment where people download an MP3 file containing instructions, and perform them at the same time.

People's reactions ranged from curious to amusement. If you and your friends ever dreamed of conducting your own flash mob session here, now is your chance.

Tsuperstreet (http://www.tsuperstreet.com), hosted by Andi Manzano and Betchay Bonifacio, is the first-ever user-generated online youth show in the Philippines.

Participating school organizations are invited to come up with their rendition and upload it to the site. Currently there are already 7 Tsuperstreet workmates up on the site, from the UP Theatre Council, Sidaway Silot and Tanghalang Ateneo, San Sebastian Theater Arts Guild, PEC-HHH Theater society, Trinity Student Council, PUP Junior Cooperators Association, and La Consolacion College Manila's new Group.

The Tsuperstreets feature varied sections, such as the cheat beats dancing to a school library, and the group of students suddenly taken over with a case of the itches. Half the fun of watching these videos is how the "audience" reacts to the performances.

Why an online show? Cindy Abella, brand manager for Tang Fruit Tree, said that "because of today an internally current and its constant search of something to do. The Tsuperstreets can be a venue for expressing their creativity as something existing and different. Indeed, the webisodes are three and more.

At the website, viewers can vote the three favorite videos, upload some of their own, or just download themes, skins, and screensavers. The Tsuperstreet with the most online votes will win a total of P150,000 in prizes for their organization and their school. Voting ends on March 31.

Any clubs who are interested to making their own Tsuperstreet, it's open to both professional and amateur videographers, as long as it incorporates the Fruit Tree philosophy of being creative and different. Check out the Tsuperstreet website for more information.

super LIFESTYLE
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Men are at risk of heart disease as they reach their 40s, while women are at greater risk when they reach menopause.*

Take good care of your heart: care in healthy lifestyle with proper nutrition and exercise. Choose a diet that's low in cholesterol, rich in antioxidants and fiber and a good source of EPA & and PUFA.

Ensure supports the healthy lifestyle of Filipinos with complete and balanced nutrition.

ENSURE your health
ENSURE your heart

SUPER EXCLUSIVE

Is there life after Grissom?

Fans sending planes to fly over Universal Studios with the banner 'Save Sara Sidle'—this and other stuff we learned on the 'CSI' set

By Pam Pastor

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA—The man was wearing blood onto the French countryside's face but the journalist didn't seem to mind. The blood was fake and the man with the gory nose Matthew Fraguglia, Hollywood's award-winning special effects master.

With crocodile tapes, we watched as Fraguglia deft hands gave the journalist a bit cheese and bullet holes on the face. It took just a few minutes, no scary weapons needed—just his scary artwork.

CBS and ADD took us to the set of "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" in Universal Studios where we spent the day exploring the production secrets and talking to the show's actors. They were filming the ninth season—a season of changes coming on the heels of the departure of Sara Sidle in the previous season, the death of Warrick Brown (confirmed after last season's cliffhanger), and Gil Grissom's much-heralded good-bye.

In a line of all these actors, I would love to have traveled the "CSI" set a year earlier. Then, Jorja Fox, Gary Dourdan and William Petersen would have been there on set.

In fact, that day Billy Petersen was in Sarasota, Chicago, opening with the theater group of fancy tastes, who plays Mac Taylor on "CSI: New York."

Still, we had plenty of people to talk to. Long-time "CSI" actors Marg Helgenberger (who plays Catherine Willows), George Eads (Nick Stokes), Eric Szmanda (Greg Sanders), Paul Guilfoyle (Capt. Jim Brass) and Robert David Hall (Dr. Al Robbins) snuck out between takes to express their feelings about the recent changes and to share their memories about our members who have already left.

He met the two new CSI: NEW YORK

GRISSOM holds a dying Warrick in his arms

"CSI" cast members Marg Helgenberger (Catherine Willows), Eric Szmanda (Greg Sanders), Paul Guilfoyle (Capt. Jim Brass) and Robert David Hall (Dr. Al Robbins) smack out between takes to express their feelings about the recent changes and to share their memories about our members who have already left.

SUPER EXCLUSIVE

Hear it from 'CSI Las Vegas' cast

Sara has left, Warrick is dead, Grissom's saying goodbye soon. What's happening this season? Super finds out

By Pam Pastor

Paul Guilfoyle (Capt. Jim Brass)

HE SAID HE OR WHAT DOES CONSIDER the world's No. 1 television show but that doesn't make Paul Guilfoyle a fan of TV. In fact, he rarely watches "CSI." "I don't want to become a fan. I don't want to get affected," he said.

What happens to Brass this season?

Well, I think of Brass as someone who things really don't happen to. Things happen around him. You know what I mean?

Lauren Lee Smith (Riley Adams)
No, she's no Sara Sidle replacement

You've seen her on "Ludred," now you'll see her on "CSI."

The first thing Lauren Lee Smith wants "CSI" fans to know is that she will not replace Jorja Fox, who played Sara Sidle. "That would put way too much pressure on me," she said.

How hard was it to walk cautiously on set as a newcomer?

It was very daunting coming into something so established. First few days, I was very overwhelmed, but everyone made it so easy.

Can you tell us about your character?

Riley comes into the show where she's unidentified. They need a DE on to the field. She's CIS level 3—a cop, from St. Louis. She has a lot of an issue with authority figures. She likes to push people's buttons.

How much research did you do to prepare?

It was crazy. I had about a week. They flew me to Vegas and had me do a ride-along with actual CIS. They had me go on the crime lab to [illegible].

How did you end up with a job on the biggest show in the world?

I think they had seen a demo tape of mine from some films and some paid television stuff that I'd done. I flew in from Vancouver and we just talked about the character. It sounded like an amazing opportunity. I got very lucky.

It's also show that kind of deals with death and darkness. how hard is it to let go of that when you're going home?

It's pretty varied. But for the most part, you just have to let it go. It's part of the job, and you have to sort of put your home in a different place. Some days are easier than others. It helps that everyone has a really wicked sense of humor.

What has been your worst moment so far?

Watching the scripts on pretty great. I know everything is fake. I know it's plastic and I know it's fake blood and I know it's not a real human. Just for some reason, when they're like, spending stuff, it's pretty great. Especially when it's right after lunch.

READY P.3

Araneta Center

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Gateway

A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

Where to Stop Where to Go

Experience a restful retreat at The Century Park Hotel this Lent

THIS LENTEN SEASON, DAZE some days off for relaxation and rejuvenation with Century Park Hotel's spiritual Easter room package.

For only P6,300 per night or the Executive or Park Terrace suite, couples will enjoy a hearty buffet breakfast at Café in the Park and hotel amenities like the temperature-controlled pools, jacuzzi, and gym. Inclusive in the package is a gift basket with goodies and 4 at-home tickets (2 adults and 2 kids) for the Easter Feast's celebration on April 12 (10am–4pm) set amid a fun, specially-themed Eco Park where kids will avail the promos.

Join in Century Park Hotel as it kicks off the Easter Sunday with prayer and fun-way of celebrating the day.

For a very affordable price of only P450 both kids and adults entrance fee, enjoy 3 hours of fun at the Action Lounge starting 12 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. The whole family will surely be in awe watching the award-winning magic show of Paul Romero, wherein the patrons are ready to unbelieve himself. Full details of can't accordingly to your kid's worry, even for adults. Professor Arnold Ergueros will also share some interesting sections to do crafts.

Buffet will mainly cheer with assortment for their kids during the egg hunt, a bonus activity of Easter party. A 2-night stay gift certificate from Bagobo Country Club will also be raffled off, a perfect summer destination to save the cool breeze with the fresh water pools. Another exciting prize is the Unlimited Rides for one lucky person which is a must-visit destination for the whole family this summer. What's more, Rizal International School will also raffle off special summer workshop gift certificates for kids, which they need to learn more about music, astronomy, technology, or arts and crafts!

Of course, the best part after an energizing party is to partake in an indulging food experience. Just show your Easter tickets at Café in the Park or Century Tosaki and avail of the 20 percent discount for each person on the day.

For more information, please call food and beverage at 526-5027 or 529-5030 for room reservations. Log on to www.centurypark.com.ph for more details.

Marco Polo Davao appoints new executive assistant manager

MARCO POLO HOTELS APPOINTED JERSON F. Bracale as executive assistant manager of Marco Polo Davao. Bracale was previously assigned as head of marketing, effective March 9. Bracale joined the hotel as director of sales and marketing in 2008, overseeing reservations, banquet sales, room sales, public relations and the hotel's Manila sales office. He recently completed league with a 5-month Luxen Development Program at the Marco Polo Hotels in Hong Kong in 2007 and the Marco Polo Ortigas in Manila in 2008.

Bracale holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of the Philippines-Diliman. He has been in the tourism and business sector for the past 10 years. He has once been a Professional Congress Organizer (PCO) as managing director of Convexion Inc and recognition awards as the Officer of the President Malacañan. He started his professional career in congressional fellow for Region XI of the Philippines House of Representatives. He has written for business and lifestyle publications like Mindanao. This is his second MCJ to participate in Mindanao at the same time. Bracale announced the promotion of Adrian Dancerie Pedalion from assistant director of sales to director of sales.

The Linden Suites is voting to save the Earth

FROM MELTING GLACIERS TO RECKLESS summer weather patterns, we know that climate change is already impacting life on our planet. On Saturday, March 26, at 8:30 to 9:30 p.m., The Linden Suites and its employees will take part in Earth Hour, the world's largest global climate change event.

By simply turning off any excessive or unnecessary lights, while maintaining vital electrical lighting for necessary tasks and adequate safety, we will join tens of millions of concerned citizens the night of the world is calling for action to save our planet for future generations.

For inquiries, contact The Linden Suites at (+632) 638-7979 or visit their website at www.lindensuites.com.

Easter morning at The Sulo Hotel

THE SULO HOTEL IS INVITING EVERYONE TO MAKE SPIRITUAL FEEL good morning as it celebrates Easter on April 12 from 6:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. dubbed as "Easter Morning at Sulo". There will be a grand breakfast buffet for only P380 set consisting of an assortment of sweets and pastries, imported sausages and cold cuts, fruit flavored yoghurts, hot dishes, all-time breakfast favorites like pancakes, banana pancakes, bacon and eggs, native longanisa, corned beef, bacon and fried rice. Moreover, a lot of fun-filled activities, prizes and freebies are in store for the first 50 guests. Some of the activities organized by: Diana Ota, Storytime's Scribbers, Tree Top Apple Juice, Jack & Jill, Mexas Instant Mixes, Lemon Square Corporation, Leslie Cano, Bambi Professionals, Quantum Amusement, Club Survey, Q & A Membership Shopping, Vanya Food Potato Chips, Watch Philz Inc, Absolute Salon Corp and Bienvenidos. For Landlin Room Promo and reservations, call (02) 924-5051 or visit The Sulo Hotel at Maginhawa Road, Diliman, Quezon City. Also, log on to the website at www.sulohotel.com.ph.

Easter indulgence at Pan Pacific Manila

ENJOY THAT MUCH NEEDED HOLIDAY break and bring the whole family at Pan Pacific Manila this Easter. Valid from April 4 to 12, avail of the Easter Indulgence room rate starting at P6,500 net per night, also entitles you to a 20 percent discount on food and beverage at the Pacific Lounge (except in-room dining) and 20 percent discount on the Easter Egg Hunt activity.

On April 12 starting at 10 a.m., let the kids experience an unforgettable Amazing Hunt where hundreds of ready eggs are at stake. Kids will be divided in to special decor, face painting and bazaar. Every contestant will enjoy egg painting and bunny coloring session. Ingeniously Amazing Hunt admission is at P900 net per child (3–12 years old) which includes kids' participation in all activities and buffet lunch.

All rates are valid in local residents. For reservation and inquiries, e-mail reservation@panpacific.com or call 836-4788 and ask for the Indulgence Package.

Easter break escape at The Richmonde Hotel

PHILIPPINES, 2 TO 12, LOCAL residents and foreigners with or valid ACR card holders away from the family or summer vacation destinations can escape to a short hideaway with Richmonde's Easter Resort Package. Enjoy an easy and relaxing time with loved ones in any of the well-appointed guest rooms with the rate starting at P1,035 net for an overnight stay with buffet breakfast for two. Children 6 years old and below, 11 years old and below and teens below 18 years old will have staying in twice a year. Unlimited weights. For the kids and the kids at heart, the hotel stages a lavish themed Easter Sunday Party at the Sagpaa Restaurant Gyeonnae Rooftop Terrace. Children will surely delight in the Easter egg hunt and the many fun games, prizes, snacks, entertainment and other treats in store for them. Tickets are priced at P400 net per child and P1,000 net per adult. Party starts at 8:30 a.m. A grand Buffet Sunday Buffet proper starts there at The Richmonde Grill for only P1,200 net per person. Take advantage of these and more Easter promos when you check out the special promotional rates of The Richmonde for the rest of the summer. For inquiries and reservations, call 556.7777. The Richmonde Hotel is located at 21 Dai Mapat Avenue, Diliman Center, Pasay City.

Hotel Alejandro
Apple Tree Resort Hotel
Avenue Plaza Hotel
Baguio Country Club
Bali Village Hotel
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Hear it from 'CSI Las Vegas' cast

From page F1

Marg Helgenberger (Catherine Willows)

With Grissom making his exit, bring Helgenberger's character Catherine Willows will be the new head of the crime lab. "It looks like I lost my partner in a lot of ways," but Catherine is ready for her new responsibilities. "I think she wants to be as inclusive as possible and give as much confidence to all the other members of the team," said Helgenberger.

How sentimental has this whole transition been for you?

I still get emotional thinking about the last scene I did with Billy. It feels like I lost my partner in a lot of ways, you know. But I have nothing but the best feelings for him. In fact, I was planning on going to see [at play in Chicago]. I have that key evening both to do the 200th episode. I just have a feeling that, you know, I will work with him again other than this.

What's it like being the new leader in the show?

I have made some of the choices about the type of leader that I want to see my character doing and that is, [as somebody who is going to be a lot more in charge,] Not that Grissom was not. He kept a lot to himself, and I don't see Catherine as that at all. I think she shares what she needs to and withholds when she needs to. But I think she wants to be in his/her business to some degree and give as much confidence to all the other members of the team.

Do you consider yourself as a role model for girls and women?

I do consider myself a role model. When the show became successful, girls, teenage girls, young women would come up to me and say they've been so uplifted by any character I could felt the need to make sure that I made the right choices and talked to the writers, give them ideas.

What's the hardest thing about playing the same character for so many years?

Staying inspired. I think that people who do this for a living, the real criminalists, [also] think they now get bored with their job. I think at times, they get burned out. They can't cope with it anymore. It's just too tied for them or it's just too daily, or it's affecting their personal life. But the story that, I think, turned out the same than can stay in the public, can stay in the country, I think that's why our show has remained so successful. It does focus on the mystery.

Robert David Hall (Dr. Al Robbins)

Not everyone knows that Robert David Hall, who plays Dr. Al Robbins on "CSI," has two prosthetic legs. He was run over by a drunk driver 30 years ago. The actor chose when he role in "CSI" not just because of his love for the show and the stability it's given him, but also because it's helped him enlighten people about disability. "I would say to any person...any young person with a disability, there is no excuse. If you study and have talent, why you shouldn't be able to get into the business and do something great."

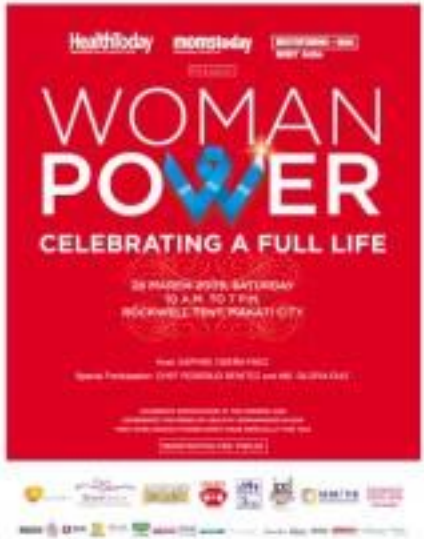
Can you talk about the changes going on with the cast?

I will miss and do miss Billy Petersen. He's the reason I'm on the show in the first place. I was just a day actor coming in to look as a body and go, "They're dead, all right." Billy pointed at me and said, "This guy might be a good resource" And it changed my life.

Do you ever get tired of the dead bodies? Do you feel like playing a love scene sometimes?

Yes sometimes! But when I sound like robot I go to the producers here. [Laughter]

MORE F4



Tours, Leisure & Chow

'March'ing your way to a superb experience at The Bellevue

DELIGHTING THE SENSES IN more ways than one, The Bellevue Hotel, the hottest hotel south of the metro, plays host to amazing cuisine to celebrate this month. The graduates of 2009's all have more reasons to celebrate as The Bellevue rewards their years of hard work with a superb gift—when lunch or dinner buffet upon presentation of their diploma or certificate of graduation. Aside from scrumptious fare, savoring the delectable flavors of the finest cuisines at Cafe d'Asie, newly-grads will also get a chance to win an overnight stay at the luxurious hotel during the special raffle for the graduate diners.

Craving for some healthy treats? Nourish your body with the goodness of watercress, the delightful mix of artichokes and the luscious taste of fresh salads. Try the appetizing soup and baked combo fresh at Cafe d'Asie. Weekends or Fridays can not stop you a pizza lover? Embrace the pizza madness as you savor a lot homemade pizza smothered with melted mozzarella cheese, generously sprinkled with flavorful toppings matched with a smooth drink at The Bellevue's poolside. Party your way in the chic 20/20 Bar as you pop your favorite jokes flown from your mouth with an ebony pizza bites perfectly matched with ice-cold beer.

Longing for a healthy treat too? Spa addicts will surely have a reason to delight as The Bellevue Spa offers its natural body techniques - the revitalizing Dynamis scrub.

Enjoy these fabulous treats until March 31 only at The Bellevue Hotel. For inquiries, call 771-6151.

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FUN IN THE SUN, GOOD FOOD and relaxing massages are all combined in Thunderbird Resorts Plaza's Cool Summer Deals. It is a bundled summer package that will make your vacation worry free while having simple pleasures of the season, priced at P5,280.

Known for its business-inspired concept, Thunderbird Resort-Plaza Point is the best venue for your group vacation. Excellent for summer outings, team buildings and for family get away, the property boast of 36 deluxe rooms and suites and is fit for intimate Mediterranean experience that you can have for just a couple of hours drive from Manila. For a more adventurous summer, head up north to feel the hot breeze and begin the thrill at the price of P5,280.

For reservations and inquiries call 0229666.5555 Makati sales office, 0229651-6666 Hotel sales, 0972-0888-7777 from Pinas sales or e-mail at thunderbirdresorts@thunderbird-asia.com, pointreservations@thunderbird-asia.com or visit the website at www.thunderbirdresorts.com/cebuplaza.

Thunderbird Resort-Ryad is located at Barrio Apas, Mactan, Cebu while Thunderbird Resort-Plaza Point is located at Plaza Point Transport Zone, San Fernando City La Union.

Countdown to a cool summer at Quantum's Makati Properties

SWEEP THE SUMMER HEAT OUT THE hot days and balmy cool down and freshen up right here in the city. They take a break and enjoy Quantum's "Cool Summer Countdown" package to stay at least three nights on a One Bedroom Suite at any of Rizal Makati properties - RSA Tower, RSA Suites and Pedro Gil suites.

From April 1- May 30, this 3-night package rate start at P3,000 for the first night, P1,000 set for the second night, and P1,000 set for the third night. And guests availing of the 3-night "Cool Summer Countdown" package will be given a gift certificate valid until June 30 to complimentary lunch at gil's cafe.

The package also includes welcome food and wines, complimentary coffee set-up, an ice bid and red breakfast for two persons.

Rizal within a comfortable radius of Makati's business and leisure communities, RSA Tower, RSA Suites and Pedro Makati offer fully air-conditioned apartments that are furnished with separate living, dining, kitchen, and bedroom areas and elegantly allied bathrooms with hot and cold water facilities. Expertly managed by the renowned property management team of Quantum Hotels and Resorts, they also feature the most convenient offerings.

This cool countdown rate is valid for hotel residents and foreigners with ACR and is not valid for conventions or group bookings. Prices and reservations are required as rooms are subject to availability.

For more information and bookings, contact Quantum's Manila Sales and Reservation office at tel. no. (632)886-3600 loc. 6224 e-mail to sales@quantum-suites.com or visit www.quantum-suites.com.

Eric Szmanda (Greg Sanders)

Hear it from 'CSI Las Vegas' cast

George Eads (Nick Stokes)

"I'd like to think that I could become a real crime scene," says late bromide. But because he doesn't have a lot of crime scenes to process off-set except for the one time he was tethered, he spends his time away from the set of "CSI" finding other creative outlets...like his production company, his website and his online radio show.

There have been so many changes in the show—what has it been like for you?

It's been very exciting and yet bittersweet at the same time. You know, Jorja and I were really good friends. We still are friends and we'll continue to be friends. In terms of Laurence Fishburne, I'm a huge fan of his and now I've been working with him almost every day. I'll always remember the first night years finally and I look forward to eight more.

How does Greg deal with all the changes? As good as you do?

I think Greg probably has a little bit more of a difficult time accepting Grissom's departure. Because if it wasn't for Grissom, Greg wouldn't be where he is. He was kind of like the father figure. When I did my last scene with Bill, I got emotional about it. I'll remain good friends with him, and I'm sure he'll be back for a couple special appearances in the future. At least that's what he says.

Do you think that you would do CSI work in real life, now?

I'd like to think that I would pursue a crime scene. I approach almost every situation a bit differently now. My house got robbed a few years ago and I was walking through the house with the detective pointing out footprints. Like something had been thrown across the room. I was like, "You might want to price that." And he just started laughing at me. He didn't know that I was on "CSI." And he's like, "Man, because of these crime shows on TV they think we can just fingerprint things everywhere."

Is there life after Grissom?

Superman, Spiderman, Green Lantern—many people have told George Eads he can easily play those superheroes. But for now he's glad to be Nick Stokes. "I want to be here. There's nowhere else I'd rather be," he said.

Can you tell us a little bit about the impact of Billy Petersen and Gary Dourdan both leaving?

Very simply, it's a loss of two good friends who I enjoyed working with day in and day out and who I've known from 1 think 88-89 and Gary are both fine actors. And, you know Gary and I used to say we'd read from each other. We would watch an episode and we'd go, "Oh, I like what you did. I think I'm going to steal that." Gary just had an overuse of cardiacs about him and a magnetism that was contagious, and I owe a lot to Gary. Gary kind of taught me a lot without really realizing he was doing it. And I think I would say the same about Bill, even more so. I remember in the auditions for the show, I was thinking to myself, "Oh, my God. There's a man bunnies. That's to live and die in L.A. That's one of my favorite actors." I'd already thought in my mind, if they got this guy—who is a real actor, not just an entertainer...does they were serious about doing a really good show.

Have Grissom fans left Nick behind of the leading persons out in the field. How does your character feel about that?

I've turned off the inner conversation in my head, the process that speculates the person that criticizes. I found peace in the closing in the moments, and living in that moment. I think he used to want to be a good CSI for the victims.

Can you talk a little bit about your dynamic with Laurence Fishburne's character? You're going to be his classmate's mentor right?

Laurence has been a very good sport, and I told him that I appreciate him being such a good sport, that it was kind of like trying to teach Superman how to fly or something.

Brass: Les how to whip someboody's ass. It just doesn't really work right. That cracks Laurence up and his comments back to me were, "Hey, baby I came to play!"

How often do you guys get to go to Vegas? Do you do any gambling when you're there?

We usually go about four times a year. It just kind of depends on what episode is taken, and where you are in the episode. If you're going to go or not. But yeah, I've won $20,000 on a video poker machine but some casinos are nicer than others are more discerning in a cost. You think, I want to tell some time, to play some video poker, and I won the jackpot.

What did you do with the money?

I took twenty grand and put it up in the safe up in the room. There I just saved around sixty grand. I'm not sure.

What else you want about Gil Grissom and Billy Petersen?

This total mystique. Even the way he treated the crew, Billy from the way he treats crew at cast and workers. We can just concentrate without saying anything to each other, and Billy could give me a look and I could give him a look back, and I think that would speak volumes.

Laurence Fishburne (Dr. Raymond Langston)

News about Laurence Fishburne joining "CSI" came in a shock to people all over the world—even to Laurence Fishburne himself. "People kept asking me if it was true. But I didn't know anything about it." It did turn out to be true—and "just when it happy about it. "I felt like I was a good match for the tone of the show, I think I do."

We were surprised to hear you were joining the show. Was this something you prepared for?

It was a surprise to me. I think I was working in New York, in Broadway. I came to the theater one day and someone who was working there said, "Is it true?" And I said, "What are you talking about?" And they handed me this paper and there was something in the paper about "CSI," my name, John Stokes/Nick's name. I thought, "Oh. Well, that's crazy. I haven't heard of that." For about two weeks, people kept asking me if it was true. But I didn't know anything about it. Finally, I called my people and I said, "Is there any truth to this?" They said, "Oh, yeah. We've been talking to them for a while." I said, "Oh, okay. Great." [Laughter]

What made you say yes to the role?

I had a meeting with Carol Mendelsohn and Steve Shenker. They gave me a couple of episodes to look at. I don't watch a lot of television, but I was impressed with what I saw. I really really felt that the writing was first-rate. I'm a friend of William Petersen. I've known Bill Petersen for a while. Our paths have crossed many times, and he's just a great guy. And I felt like the tone of the show, I felt like I was a good match for the tone of the show. So I said yes.

Why did you decide to join television now?

I had nothing against television. I like television. I've worked in television before. I did three movies for HBO back in the '90s, and I did the "Pee-wee's Playhouse" show in the '80s, and I was on a soap opera in the '70s. But the idea of doing, I guess, a series like this was something that I sort of resisted. I thought I would get to it by the time I was about 50 [years old], as I'm right on time. I'm 47 now, so it's fine. It's good timing.

How did you prepare for the role? Did you know a lot about science?

To be perfectly honest with you, I'm still preparing for this. That is not something that I'm going to "get" overnight.

Tell us more about your character.

My character did have a family before. He had a family. He came to Las Vegas primarily to lecture. He's a guy who is a pathologist, a research pathologist in a hospital, and someone he was working with turned out to be accused of death.

And all of the evidence came before him and he wasn't able to determine whether or not somebody was being murdered; it wasn't until after the fact that he realized this person he was working with was committing these horrible crimes. So he writes this book about it and he writes that book, he goes around the country lecturing about serial killers, basically, because he sees in each show proximity to me. And the episode in which we meet Dr. Langston, he's doing a lecture and he actually set up a situation where the students are having a discussion, a conversation with a serial killer who is in jail. Dr. Grissom comes in this lecture is sort of learn about another killer that they're pursuing that they've been pursuing before. So the events of this two-episode arc, he offers me a position in a CSI-Level 3.

Did you thought you were coming in as the new boss—and to find out that you're the rookie is quite a twist.

It's really smart. I think it's really brilliant. It's one of the reasons that I was able to say yes, is because what's really impressive to me about "CSI," is that they have managed for nine seasons to consistently come up with really good material. In their idea was to bring a guy on who is, to many respects, a guy who has a lot of authority and presence and knowledge and all of this practical stuff, and you would expect it to be, you know, an actor like Laurence Fishburne. Oh, yeah, he's the boss man. But it's much more interesting to have him start out as the low man on the totem pole. It's going to be a lot of fun.

The challenge for me is to ensure that is not to mistake my own presence for the reverse, intimidation, in short, not to come in here thinking, "Okay I'm the new guy so I've gotta, like, tell everybody how it's going to be because I'm supposed to be in charge." You have to bring something—the challenge is to bring a character who is interesting, watchable, likable enough, I suppose, that people are interested in coming back to see what's going to happen next week. I think that's the greatest challenge.

Are you squeamish? How do you feel about the autopsies?

I'm not really good with that stuff. The writers gave me a couple of books about pathology. I opened one of them and saw some pretty intense photographs and immediately closed it. I need some time to actually prepare myself mentally and emotionally for what those experiences will be because it's not something that most of us in human beings do on.

Any interactions about the reception of the fans, especially the ones who are really attached to the character of Grissom?

If I was smarter, I might be a little nervous about it. But the fact of the matter is, they've done something very, very smart in the way in which they introduced Langston—until it is really with the audiences' feelings about Grissom that they do the thing. I won't talk about what it is, but it's branched the way it's done. So I'm not nervous about that at all. I believe that the audience will accept Professor Langston. I think they'll embrace him. I think it will be really nice.

What do you do for fun?

I ride motorcycles.

Watch "CSI" Season 9 on AXN every Wednesday at 10 p.m.

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Is there life after Grissom?

From page F1

CSI—Laurence Lee Smith and Laurence Fishburne—finish, familiar victims of "The Lord," plays Gilley Adams, who accused she is "not there to replace Sara Sidle."

Fishburne's name has created quite a buzz online long before Season 9 started. Fans speculated he'll replace Grissom and they used the Internet to protest.

"CSI" executive producers and co-directors Simon Shenker and Carol Mendelsohn didn't seem to be too worried though. Shenker said, "It's always encouraging, but the way we're bringing Fishburne into the show actually helps reduce the level of anxiety a little because he enters the show in a two-part episode, Episode 8 and 10. He is sort of drawn into a case with Grissom and Sara. By coming in that way, we were able to both introduce the new character, let Grissom exit and also pass the torch to the new guy. I think people are going to love Episodes 9 and 10. It's intense, moving and emotional, and they also get to see this new face and see him accepted by Grissom, which hopefully is a blessing on him for the rest of the show."

And, contrary to what people thought, Fishburne's character Ray Langston isn't the new boss. He's coming in as a rookie. Shenker said, "We are starting him at the bottom. He is coming in as a novice. I think that was part of what sold Fishburne on the character. That was something he hadn't played, a man who had, well into his professional life, decided to change careers and start again at the bottom because he has a desire to do a little good in the world."

Fans also reacted strongly to the departure of Sara and Warrick. They put up petitions and sent money to the show's producers to keep their favorite characters. "CSI" may be about the science of forensics, but viewers are apparently get attached to their favorite characters.

Shenker believes it's a good thing. "We feel great that in a show that is 'procedural drama' [the 'star' of the show is the science/investigation, more than the characters], four have, over the years, grown so attached to our characters. It's a great tribute to our actors. We think we have the best cast. So, we've had fans have plaster fly over Laurence Fishburne with favorites. Now Sara Sidle." For a while last year, every day she/he would send something."

Shenker added, "They'll send clothes to us in glee, I guess, a larger entry. We do cared it is so dumby. We didn't keep it."

Shenker and Mendelsohn believe the fans have nothing to worry about. "These characters may not be on the screen every week, but they're never gone from "CSI." They said Fan and Brewster could do special appearances on the show.

New CSIs, translators, Lady Heather, the Miniature Killer, more forensic inspector—there's no doubt fans will be glued to their TV screens once again.

Watch "CSI" Season 9 on AXN every Wednesday at 10 p.m.

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A visit to the set of Charice's first Hollywood movie

LOS ANGELES—OVER 400 hundred extras playing high school students watching a musical competition didn't need to be instructed to clap, cheer, break into appreciative whistles and pump their fists after Charice Pempengco sang Alicia Keys' "No One" in a scene filmed for "Alvin and the Chipmunks 2: The Squeakquel" last Monday.

Upon the invitation of 20th Century Fox, we visited the set of "The Squeakquel" at the Woodrow Wilson High School in Long Beach, California and witnessed Charice shoot her first big scene in the Hollywood movie, which will be shown in December in the US and in January in the Philippines.

From a park across the street, the school appeared like any other campus on a sunny, cool spring morning. Students in their PE uniforms—white tees or sweatshirts and maroon shorts—were shooting hoops and playing volleyball.

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Rubrey F. Negradez

But the tranquility was broken by two fire patrollers, crossed the street to secure the campus.

Things appeared normal until we entered the gym. Thanks to a fog machine, the gym appeared full of smoke, underscoring that likely-assault's dream-making machinery was literally at work here. Outside may be an anachronistic in any suburban high school campus, but in there, it was storybook-culture control time.

We were going to witness the film's climax, in which those lovable Chipmunks (Alvin, Theodore and Simon), The Chipettes (Brittany, Eleanor and Jeanette), Charice and other contestants from various high schools were going to duke it out for the $25,000 cash prize. Guess who won? Hundreds of extras stood on the gym floor or sat in the bleachers. Even the balcony was full of extras...or, at least, of first glance, they appeared jam-packed (more about this later).

Support

Two basketball stands were moved to a corner away from camera range to make way for a stage that jutted out from the proscenium. Signs around the stage declared that this was indeed a contest time, while in the bleachers and on the balcony railings, posters announcing support for the contestants were hung or were held high by the extras. The motivating movement of a camera dangling from a long crane, able to swoop low and about to the ground or hover above, near the ceiling, reminded us of a giraffe or a dragonfly.

We should be jaded by now, but we visitors like this still surprise us at how good and or what lengths Hollywood will go to create its make-believe worlds. In this case, it's one in which Barry Bonds reminisces interact with Beatrice that includes Dame Seville (Jason Lee), his nephew Toby (Zachary Levi), teachers Julie Chipmunk (Anjelah Johnson), school principal Dr. Rubin (Wendie Malick), and the chipmunk trio's manager, Ian Hawke (David Cross).

While the crew set up to shoot the next scenes, we stood outside to the back of the gym to begin the interviews with the main cast and some of the behind-the-scene talents. We found a quiet spot to begin: two padded movie equipment trucks and set on portable chairs.

Rock stars

Nice to be interviewed was animation superstar, Chris Bailey, who created that, while computer-animation technology has improved dramatically in recent years, it still came down to how seamlessly the computer-generated characters appeared. For example, the "smoke" [illegible] are mixed by Jamie Long, Jason McCartney and Matthew Gray Gubler), have to cause scenes in rock stars. "And they are rock stars," Chris quipped.

Anjelah, who was toddling to perfectly high heels to one of the earlier scenes we watched, came out in comfortable and sneakers under Ugg boots, but [illegible] in clips on. Of the cameras rolled again. Like Charice, she is a YouTube sensation...her "Bad Bachelor" clip is wildly popular and led to a successful standup comedy career. Her, in this film, directed by Betty Thomas, Anjelah says in her comic impulses because she's the [illegible] interest of Zachary's rebbish character.

"She's a phenomenal singer!" Anjelah exclaimed about Charice. She said she was struck by how friendly the Filipino singer was, greeting everyone earlier in the make-up room with a hug and a kiss.

(To be continued tomorrow)

CHARICE: Makes her big screen debut in "Alvin and the Chipmunks 2: The Squeakquel."

FARMIGA (ABOVE), lifelong performance.

"THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PAJAMAS." Unpredictable horror.

Unusual perspective for Holocaust drama

By Mordani Tarre

IN "THE BOY IN THE STRIPED Pajamas," the horrors of the Holocaust are told from an unusual perspective—that of 8-year-old Bruno (Asa Butterfield), who realizes through his friendship with a Jewish boy his father is the commandant of a concentration camp.

Not knowing that the "farm" his father runs is what we, the audience, know it to be, he naively thinks that his friend is just part of a strange game that requires its players to wear matching striped pajamas.

This is a tale that, when outlined, sounds suspiciously like it's going down the road of emotional manipulation, or worse, the trivialization of an unspeakable horror. But, the film is too delicate and the performances too nuanced to be dismissed as such.

Based on the book by John Boyne and directed and written for the screen by Mark Herman, the movie requires its audience to suspend more disbelief than usual, but once you get past the inconsistencies and inaccuracies, it will draw you and have you thinking about it for a long time after.

Dark tour

The film's opening quote from poet John Robinson nicely sums up its overall feel: "Childhood is measured out by sounds and smells and sights, before the dark hints of sorrow grown."

The children in this tale, both Bruno (Asa Butterfield), the commandant's son, and Shmuel (Jack Scanlon), the titular "boy in the striped pajamas," do not have to think much about the circumstances that surround them. Bruno doesn't understand why Shmuel is where he is, and neither does Shmuel—the impressive thing for both is that they'll easily have a friend their own age to talk to and play checkers with.

Short by British (reflecting on a chess, golden light that floats over the innocence that's at the center of the movie, while seamlessly dimply with the dark eyes that is forever lurking at the edges, the film beautiful meet from the textured performances of its actors. Butterfield and Scanlon are wide-eyed and innocent without being unbelievably tragedy, and the adults do their best with the roles they're given.

Disillusionment

Vera Farmiga, who plays Bruno's mother, is particularly affecting as the wife of a Nazi official deliberately—or unconsciously—in denial of the atrocities her husband and society are committing, but who nonetheless cannot escape descending into dark disillusionment.

David Thewlis, a familiar face to fans of the Harry Potter franchise (as the genius Professor Lupin), is almost unrecognizable as a chilling personification of all the willfully blind Nazis who gave London the Third Reich.

Top US singers keep coming, thanks to this Pinay

By Edmund L. Scare

IN THE PAST, MOST FOREIGN entertainers who performed in the country were no longer as popular as they were in their heyday. Lately however, local audience have been reunited to concerts that feature current hot stars like Beyoncé, Mariah Carey, Alicia Keys, Christina Aguilera, Akon Bryn, Josh Groban and many more.

This welcome development is due mainly to the efforts of Pinay music management whiz, Mitzi Pascua, who has been successful in convincing US-based talent managers to include Manila when their artists perform in Asia. She has been able to Depot wonder that the country is not a side place to visit.

Aside from her many issues, Mitzi has to cope with unpredictable weather. When a writer's talent her readers a certain amount. It's no longer feasible to hold the show at the Araneta Coliseum. So, we have to see open venues to accommodate larger audiences. Thus, weather become a major concern," she observes.

Mitzi must have a strong constitution up there, because it has never missed on her events. Maybe it's because she offers eggs to Sta. Claus. Even when a storm threatens to spoil her party, the weather improves at the last minute.

Storm

The summer, it was raining the day Lassie Peek was scheduled to perform at the GOP grounds. It's past, the rain stopped. When Boyzone performed at the Bowl, it was raining cats and dogs in Los Pilos and Quezon City, but the first was dry. It was Signal No. 2 when Mariah did her show, and the Fort was drenched, but the storm spared her concert.

The only time the weather affected her concert was when Akon was had to perform inside the hotel of Asia, instead of the open field.

CAREY. What did she call adobo flowers and an elijah drowning meant.

What about special requirements that singers are famous for, like asking for M&M candies in the dressing room? Are they all here in the Pinay? Mitzi says that are such requirements, which has small deals with.

For instance, Mariah Carey wanted an all-white limo and an all-pink dressing room. Another one asked for beef jerky, which isn't available in Manila, so Mitzi had instructed to buy it in the US before the concert here. There was also a rock band that asked for jet point of cocks! Up to this day, she still doesn't know what they were for.

At home in the US, she hardly has time for herself because of her busy schedule. Once, though, she found that everything she worked hard for would just vanish, when she was informed by her doctor that she had carcinoma only in her throat. She had to undergo surgery to fix her medical problem.

Two hours after her operation, she was receiving phone calls about her many projects. It was back to work for her!

However, there are two artists Mitzi hasn't been able to secure an audition—Rihanna and 2U. She has followed them to Europe and all over the US, but their managers have the same answer. There's a scheduling problem and hasn't set in their priority list.

Her only consolation is that they have promised that, when they do decide to come here, they will deal with her knowing Mitzi's luck and determination, we're sure that day will eventually come!

Big-name actors get set for Broadway

NEW YORK—AFTER A SPATE of recession closings, Broadway isn't ready to get lit April 6, when a surprisingly large parade of star-driven plays will open. Consider some of names being employed to entice audiences into theaters: Jane Fonda, Jeremy Irons, Joan Allen, James Earl Jones, Geoffrey Rush, Jessica Lange, Angela Lansbury, Rupert Everett, Nathan Lane, Bill Irwin, Matthew Broderick, David Hyde Pierce.

The big question: In an increasingly expensive recession, will people come? The two-and-a-half months following the New Year are given to Broadway box offices, even in the best of times. The holidays are over. Children are back in school. People are broke—and, this year, they've more broke than usual.

Reasons

Recent closings happened for a variety of reasons. Long-running productions (two sharply had run their course, limited-engagement holiday shows, and a few that landed) gotten strong enough audiences to survive. Now, their replacements are starting to wash up, with most of Broadway's three dozen theaters booked with shows this spring.

IRONS. Portrays a photojournalist in "Inspector Sands."

Plays, both new and old, are mostly following the game plan that made financial hits out of such fall offerings as "All My Sons," "The Seagull" and "Speed-The-Plow": Limited runs with big names. Jane Fonda, who hasn't been on Broadway in 45 years, leads off the new play, co-starring with "101 Dalmatians" star Glenn Close.

And Jeremy Irons and Joan Allen follow in "Impressionism," by Richard Nelson, about the encounter between a pharmaceutical tyconed a New York gallery owner. [E]

CRUZ AND GERONIMO. Look like they're playing video catcher Chan Ho-Park (right front).

Anatomy of a flawed hit

By Nestor U. Torre

"YOU CHANGED MY LIFE." THE second book extension of Alex Lloyd (Jan Marini) is filled both to a blockbuster hit and a quality film, but agrees with the first but begins to disgrace right away.

In that follow-up romance, Sarah and Alex Lloyd play the misery-haunted they enjoyed in their first film outing. This time around, their characters are ok, so in love and John Lloyd spends a lot of time with his lady love—as if he is tapped to head a company in his family's business empire.

Lemon

The new assignment is not challenging and time-consuming that John Lloyd ends up neglecting Sarah—the latter is bored to tears and resents—out of their relationship.

John Lloyd notices that his girl friend is fuming, but he can't "diagnose" her family, so he consults [illegible] and Sarah [illegible] to [illegible] Sarah [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

SATURDAY Special

Less isn't always more for Jeffrey Katzenberg

By Rito P. Asido

WE'RE USED TO TRAVELING A LOT, BUT, our trip to Hong Kong ends this week was going to be truly significant because it presented the opportunity to get up close and personal with the moving force behind such groundbreaking—and commercially successful—animated features as "Who Framed Roger Rabbit?," "The Little Mermaid," "The Lion King," "Shrek," "Kung Fu Panda" and "Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa". Dreamworks Animation's Jeffrey Katzenberg.

In our interview with Katzenberg at the opulently swanky W hotel in Kowloon last Wednesday, the 58-year-old studio executive, who's largely acknowledged for making the so-called "cartoon flicks" more accessible to adult moviegoers, talked shop with us about his uncompromising views and passion for animation—and, boy, was he brutally frank, in more and candid!

Interesting

When we asked him why he chose to participate in promoting "Monsters vs. Aliens" in Asia, he readily replied that he liked the region "because our movies do very well here, and we truly appreciate that." It was also interesting to note that, as far as the producer was concerned, fear isn't necessarily never in animation. Excerpts:

Last week, we watched a preview of "Monsters vs. Aliens," which we found entertaining and empowering in people who feel they don't belong in the norm. How different is it to DW from the run-of-the-mill three-dimensional format?

It's a significant innovation. The tools that we have to realize our movies are very powerful—and they were created specifically for DreamWorks' animation. They allow our storytellers to have a level of control and precision in how they're creating the 3D experience. In this case, the characters don't fly off the screen, it's actually the reverse—that, as "bring" the audience into the world of our movie. It's very exciting, and immersive from inside that make believe environment. As a result, the viewing

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Less isn't always more . . .

From page 9

"MONSTERS VS. ALIENS." DreamWorks' latest animated feature uses the latest 3-D technology.

experience becomes more interactive and dynamic. Having said that, our objective now is to make sure that it would still work in the traditional 2D format.

Did you grow up loving animation too, or did you just find yourself doing it?

I didn't grow up with animation. I didn't go to school for it, and I don't draw. Got that? Who knows? In 1994, I arrived at the Walt Disney Company and was trained to be responsible for animation, which, at the time, was at its lowest point. To me, it was a time of discovery and education, because I didn't know anything about it then.

There are a lot of talented Filipinos and artistas, but our local industry doesn't have the financial capacity to fully take advantage of this wealth of talents. Does good animation always require money?

By the kind of movies we do, yes. We have around 300 people who work on a $100-million project for five years. Our productions are not only computer-animated movies, they're also among the most expensive movies made anywhere in the world. It's a unique part of the business, and it has taken many years to build up the resources to be able to do this—and, there are only two or three companies that can do this.

Very difficult

Today, DreamWorks is probably the largest animation company in the world. We have 1,700 people. We make two CG-animated movies a year. Of course, there are people who make wonderful animation in different sizes, scales and techniques, but the kind of films we make are really expensive—and very difficult to do.

Do you watch the animated films of other studios? What did you think of "Ratatouille" and "Hello With Bolt"?

I'm not going to comment on other people's work, but, yes, I watch everything. We learn and get inspiration from them....[from Mysterio's memo to Ad Polonia] "Hello With Bolt."

There was a lot of great animated features last year—"WALL-E," "Kung Fu Panda," "Bolt"—that successfully fused quality and commercial appeal. But, it's been a while since an animation film tried for a Best Picture Oscar. The first and, so far, only movie to accomplish this was 1991's "Beauty and the Beast," during your time at Disney. What would it take for animation once to get a Best Picture nod again?

The Academy has always been elitist. In all my years in the industry, I've never pretended to know the ways with which it works. I don't believe you can "make movies" to win Academy Awards. It's hard to guess the kind of movies that the Academy's 5,000 members would respond to. Films they happen, I think, they're just happy accidents.

How do you choose your productions/stories? Are you the one who actually approves or shoots down ideas? What's next for DreamWorks Animation after "Monsters vs. Aliens"?

They're products of good ideas. It's not a singular decision or skill, but, yes, the buck stops at my desk. DreamWorks has a big year in 2009 because we are lining up three projects: "How to Train Your Dragon," "Shark 4" and "Monsternaut," which is a send-up of super-hero movies.

Is it true that you were responsible for the collaboration of Disney and Pixar?

I brought Pixar to Disney.

On a lighter note: Has Terrence ever put a bid for owning the soft franchise to 1870s Manila from a "Pride" Fan?

Yes, I am a not-so-secret Terrifer (laughs).

Your body of work in animation is impressively diverse. Are you have a personal favorite?

I love all my "children" equally.

I won't let you go without asking you this: How was it working with Steven Spielberg and David Geffen. You seem really are an intimidating lot.

(Laughs) Not to each other. We've been together for 15 years, and even though the business of our company have since separated, we still stay in touch and share a lot. Hopefully, it will be there for our nieces/nephews.

Next topic: Our interview with the charming and very gracious Kinder Sardenal ("Monsters vs. Aliens")? General Pili Bilbao?, who candidly talks about his separated TV status ("24") and popular actress like Toni Gonzaga, Sean Penn, Angelina Jolie and Bonnie Raine Aida Bolivera.

Enlightenment and enrichment

LOTUS POND

R. Talentino and S. Ramnarth

WE HERE NOT FEEL IMPOVERISHED IN times of economic difficulties. Here are gems of wisdom to enlighten and enrich your life.

1. It is most empties he poore not he hired, no man can ride it away from him. An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest. —Benjamin Franklin

2. It is in knowledge as in swimming he who floateches and splashes on the surface makes more noise and attracts more attention than the good diver who quietly dives to the bottom in quest of treasures. —Washington Irving

Wisdom

3. You can buy education, but wisdom is a gift from God.

4. For wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing can desire can compare with her. —Proverbs 8:11

5. Gold there is, and rubies in abundance, but lips that speak knowledge are a rare jewel. —The Bible

6. Happy is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gets understanding. —Solomon

7. A mind enlightened is like heaven; a mind in darkness is like hell. —Chinese proverb

8. Whom, then, do I call educated? First, those who control circumstances, instead of being controlled by them; those who meet all occasions manfully and act in accordance with intelligent thinking. Those who are honorable in all dealings, who treat good naturedly persons and things that are disagreeable, and furthermore, those who hold their pleasure under control and are not overcome by misfortune. Sadly, those who are not spoiled by success. —Aristotle

9. The proof of knowledge is great riches. If it isn't plundered by kinsmen, nor stolen off by thieves, nor destroyed by gaining. —Marsh-hall

10. To be conscious that you are ignorant is a great step to knowledge. —Benjamin Disraeli

Martin's 'For Always' revisits the '80s

By Rory M. Olivares

AT 47, MARTIN NIEVERA continues to do what he enjoys most: singing. Like wine, his voice gets even better with every song he records. Ivory/Love Records has just released his latest album, "For Always," which features nine love tunes from the '50s and '60s.

NIEVERA. Releases 21th album.

Simple melodies

Nievera doesn't mind being referred to as the king of Balladeers. He explains: "I grew up listening to 'Misty' and 'The Nearness of You.' Those songs have survived because their simple melodies and meaningful lyrics move listeners. Any guy wouldn't think twice of dedicating these to the girl of his dreams. I'm glad we got requests to revive them—feel I have the obligation to do it."

"Good songs will always find new ways of interpreting classics. In my case, it has always been a collaboration between my producers, Chito Regoso, who is himself a master musician, and me. I trust his judgment completely. When I'm around, the quality of every song is guaranteed. I believe every classic tune should be given new arrangements. Using it as if I'm introducing a new song to the audience."

"For Always," Nievera's 27th album, finds only five days to record. It kicks off with 'Maybe This Time,' originally sung by Michael Murphy in the '80s. The CD is a trip down memory lane.

In the liner notes, the singer dreams his daughter about each song. Writing notes or keeping a journal has become a hobby for Martin. He says: "It's a transcript of my life, which should come in handy when I decide to tell my story it book form."

Choice cuts: Richard Marx's Nievera's "Now and Forever," Air Cappelli's "Did Ho-ngapalex," Whitney Houston's "All Dance," Dan Hill's "Sometimes When We Touch," and Survivor's "The Search Is Over." Another highlight is Frankie and Hoby "Rosalind," his latest duet with ex-wife, Pops Fernandez.

'Blame' it on Lola

WORD OF MOUTH

Arnold Jurilla

LOS ANGELES, Virgin Islands – I have to blame Lola and it took the whole day of Saturday and half of the following day for me finally (sunday) to admit it.

She stands for food reflexes, nerve fisherfolks, Russian salad, hummus, cornerbread and mercury. Because many people can relate when I say, "Oh Lola Mwanky was the best cook in the world."

Being exposed to good food at such an early age is both a blessing and curse because, today, it's difficult to please a spoiled palate.

These days, our sessions are characterized by cantankerous laughter. It's in these get-togethers where new food ideas and discoveries are made. My cousin, Franco, the daughter of Tita Juliet "Yap Diaco, is our "spy" when it comes to fabulous eats. She most knows where the tastiest dishes can be found.

Mmm delicious

From Tita Juliet, I learned that one must not miss the Spoons and Chopsticks mall at 188 Khali in Dominica, because the place makes the most delicious oyster cake (leave a verb because corrupt). She also swears by their black chicken soup.

From Dondi is the heavenly Fried Chicken. Mr. Ace, is a walking Zagat guide. Ask him anything about food, and he'll tell you wherever find the best.

Another cousin, Sujay, is the authority on Tokens, where she knows the location to find the best mixed food, as well as the fanciest and most delicious Japanese cuisine.

My sister, Nina Payne, is the authority on Bermuda. She's on a first name basis with many of the waiters there. She can name the place with her eyes closed. My cousin-in-Ailyn Sarmag's quisquirer.

Gatherings

If you bring anything to our gatherings, it has to be good—otherwise, you'll never hear the end of it. It was last get-together, I couldn't resist myself. Penny brought chocolate and steamed cakes. The first was moist, not too sweet and delicious. While I was having the chocolates, I couldn't imagine trading it with the other fun, when I tried the steamed, I felt exactly as I did about the chocolate. Both cakes were just good!

All of us are different "branches" of Manila bargains. Other than this the reason why we all love to eat good food, laugh to our hearts' delight, and live life to the fullest. It's all fun food!

Do you want a variety of those chocolate and steamed cakes? Call (920) 921-4916. Happy eating!

Comments? E-mail jurilla@yahoo.com

Exploring new worlds through reading

STREET SMART

Mandy Navarette

ADEL O. HAMPTON, who was born and raised in Bronzeville, has spent the past 25 years of his life as a realistic Dwelling who one of the things that got him the most the long and lonely nights in sea.

Similarly, Capt. Teodoro R. Quijano has always loved reading. It gave him access to the minds of the great teachers of history, communicators, writers and scientists, and it enabled him to understand himself as a spiritual being.

Portraits of Quijano and Hamilton are among 50 photographs of working men and women featured in the current exhibit, "Road to Bridge Ocean," at 3M Mall of Asia until April 1.

Mother Nature will send sweets to seafarers' children at 2:45 p.m., followed by oral lecture on photography with other makers of light at 4:45 p.m. The companion book of the masterworks is available at the 237, 188 Design Plaza, 239 Mercure Centre st., Bel Air II, Makati City.

* * *

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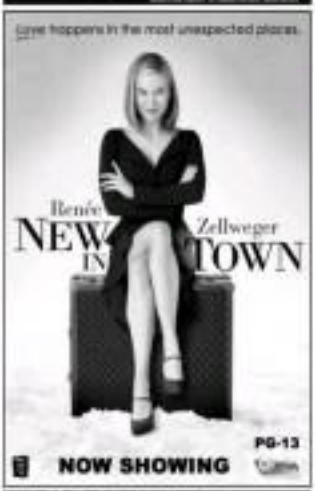
CAPTION: Teodoro with wife Lorena and daughter (from left) Lenore Maiden and Lora Theresa.



Stars behaving badly

BROWN. Now, conventionally chastened rhetorician

By Nestor U. Torre

FOR SOME WEIRD REASON (Is it the current financial recession instead psychological depression?), quite a number of stars, both foreign and local, have been behaving badly in public of late. Do they feel that, being playmates and all pampered homosexuals, they can shy-rocked loudly and flexibly across the sky anytime they please, no matter who gets rained off or hurt?

Or, could that "vulgival" be the last bad cell phone cameras and other recording devices are all over the place these days...ready and eager to "self-bottle" stars' less than stellar behavior, for they artistic world to gawk at? How much and for how much has become a pajamedic, or is it reverse.

In any case, the latest celebrity subject of intense public scrutiny and disdain is comedian Benjamin Agbayani, whose verbal altercation with people whose vehicle he'd inadvertently bocked left a few tweeters in shock, including our Eva Tolin, then on some love TV channels.

In the edited clip, Agbayani came off as unkie and insulting, quite the obnoxious stellar show-off throwing his celebrity weight around.

Footage

Lolin Antonio, for some corn cupperners by pointing out that the clip had been edited to encourage that impression, and may have left out some footage that would have provided viewers with a more balanced view of what had transpired.

So, was Agbayani the overmanner, or the victim? That depends on how the currently raging war of words and counter-words between the two parties in the issue will finally be settled.

Meanwhile, however, there are other stars who have been behaving badly in public—and in private—and, in the process, have been making headlines for the wrong reasons.

Special treatment

"Hey, you ignorant slave, don't you know who I am?" "I'm a star, so I deserve special treatment! Bibigyan ninyo ba ako ng special treatment!" "I'm busy, so I don't have time to sign autographs or pose for stupid photos with fans."

"Your questions are silly and pathetic. It would be beneath me to answer them." "You want to harass society? Even me just because you think I'm a rich and gullible star?" And, "So what if I beat up my girlfriend—that is between her and me. I can do anything I want, no interference or your own peril!" (Cf. Chris Brown.)

—Of course, when the movement hit the fan in Brown and his celebrity victim Rihanna's case, Brown instantly changed tack and image and went on humility, repentant mode. But, was anybody moved by his new, contrite, remorseful demeanor? Our answer against stars behaving badly in public...and in private!...stands.

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Legacy of beloved pontiff extolled

By Lilia Bautista-Alvarez

POPE JOHN PAUL II. Warmth and profound humility

UNKNOWN TO MANY CATHOLICS, the life of the late Karol Wojtyla, whose papacy changed the 20th century, was filled with telling anecdotes. For his fourth death anniversary (on April 2), we remember some of them with fondness:

Many recall that Pope John Paul II started an unorthodox attempt at St. Peter's when he, a Turkish gunman on May 13, 1981...but few know that when Karol was only 8 years old, he was eleven days shy a policeman, when a bullet missed him by only a few inches.

Factory

He was also nearly killed when he was working in a chemical factory in his native Poland. On his way home late one evening, a German army truck hit him, and left him crumpled in a ditch—until a woman found him. (He recuperated three weeks later.) Also in WWII, during the Nazi persecutions, a deranged man tried to stab him during a visit to Parma in Dorgad, but was stopped by security men.

When he became archbishop, he was his triumphal but and sandy pressed but failed consult. His diary had been handed so many times they were actually gatecrashed. Though he received gifts continually, he gave almost all of them away not for lack of gratitude, but because he had no understanding of accumulation," noted Msgr. Virgilio Levi and Germino Gilzone in the book, John Paul II: A Silhouette. Words and Pictures."

As a Cardinal, he had no inkling that he was being considered a papal candidate, but "he engaged in the process with his usually" In 1964, he, who was becoming known as a progressive intellectual and moral theologian, shocked the Vatican Council by being the first speaker ever to address the Council with a greeting to his "brethren and sisters," paving homage to the women who were also present. On Oct. 16, 1978, he was elected the 264th pope.

During his first press conference in Rome, the youthful 58-year-old pontiff fielded questions in eight languages.

And, which Filipino Catholic could forget his first visit to the country in 1981, when he greeted the youth gathered at UST with "Mga pinakilos kong kabataan ng Silipinas..."?

Certainly memorable moments are hard to forget. One of them took place during his coronation, when thousands crowded into St. Peter's Square. Love and affinity's book recalls: "Huwag kayo matakot, he looked into the soul of each human being, and said, 'Be...not...afraid!'" Then, a strange thing happened. Crowds were hunger to be strong, many buried their faces in their hands, and jaded photographers dabbed their eyes." Amen's to "more reading event was his 26-minute meeting with his Turkish assassin, whom he forgave.

Healing of relations

Although John Paul II's legacy involved the healing of relations between Christians and Jews, bringing down Communism in Eastern Europe, and formally apologizing for the Catholic Church's errors, he is also fondly remembered for his warmth and humility, and his unbelievable ability to connect with the youth, and, in his last years, his being "really projected to stars upon hearing about injustice, suffering or loss."

Pope Benedict XVI has encouraged speeding for the beatification of "my beloved predecessor." The current pontiff has waived the (usually) five-year waiting period for the process to commence, and Pope John Paul II's beatification began on 42 days after his death!

Discerning cinematic beauty, then and now

By Bobi Cervantes

HEPBURN. Was had a lasting effect on the world of cinema and fashion

FRANKLIN ROSADILLA, MY FRIEND in theatrefan who's a diehard Audrey Hepburn fan, emailed me a list in which the star of "Breakfast at Tiffany's," "My Fair Lady" and "Roman Holiday" was named the all-time screen beauty of all time. Then the question words: "of all time."

I couldn't disagree too much with the choice of Hepburn because, indeed, she has had a lasting effect on the world of cinema and fashion. There's such a thing as the Hepburn look—eyes, eyebrows, lips and jawline. She was also known for her emaciated body silhouette.

Choices

I also agree with the choices of Elizabeth Taylor, Vivien Leigh, Brigitte Bardot and Doris Day. Taylor's dalliance on Hollywood and the world's perception of beauty is unique and long-lasting. Ask Amelia Fuentes.

Vivien Leigh's fragile beauty contrasted with her piercing, cat-like green eyes. I mean, how can you talk about "Gone With the Wind" and not remember Scarlett O'Hara's breath?

Brigitte made films that shapely bodies harmoniously desirable. Doris Ishared the All-American look with exotica.

However, I quite like the choices of Marilyn Monroe and Grace Kelly because they were not "original." Monroe's platinum-blonde, sex siren look was patterned after Jean Harlow's look while Kelly's beauty of the Philadelphia patrician-turned-Princess of Monaco was patterned after the Swedish import, Ingrid Bergman.

Without apparently to Gloria Swanson, Theda Bara, Clara Bow, Mary Pickford, Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich and Jean Harlow? They were original, and they made a difference in the viewers' concept of screen goddesses. And, what about Ava Gardner? Her face and figure were acclaimed by Hollywood's greatest cinematographers and make-up artists.

I suspect that the panel that chose the list was made up of young people. I used Rizal's purely opinionated (sic) panel, too. At the moment, however, the new technology comedians is causing off-balance, and that should serve as a timely reminder for other celebrities in mind that the moment everytime they step out of their homes.

That may strike some stars as unfair. After all, they're people, too, so why should they always have to behave better than other folks? Everybody occasionally has a bad hair or bad manners day, so why do basic, basic rules have to be so shiny and squeaky-clean all the time?

Well, because it comes with the stellar territory. Stars benefit a lot from being publicly recognizable and popular, but there's also a gold coin gets stretched into their "exposure" with the viewing public. As celebrities, to set a good example for fans, especially for the impressionable young.

This holds true even when no alterations is involved. People are generally turned off by stars and starlets who are so full of themselves than they come off as smug and spoiled. They don't like it when stars' success stories—story and gossip—have flaws, either, so a difficult balance has to be achieved.

In general, however, stars and starlets could do themselves a big favor if they avoided such non-cell statements: declarations, boasts and/or presumptions as:

"Mga ginagawa ko sa aking pribadong buhay ay aking negosyo..."?

Certainly memorable moments are hard to forget. One of them took place during his coronation, when thousands crowded into St. Peter's Square. Love and affinity's book recalls: "Huwag kayo matakot, he looked into the soul of each human being, and said, 'Be...not...afraid!'" Then, a strange thing happened. Grown men began to weep, many buried their faces in their hands, and jaded photographers dabbed their eyes." Amen's to "more reading event was his 26-minute meeting with his Turkish assassin, whom he forgave.

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"...because they included contemporary beauties like Angelina Jolie, Catherine Zeta Jones, Nicole Kidman, Halle Berry, Julia Roberts, Maria Sharapova, Cameron Diaz, Scarlett Johansson, Charlize Theron, Jennifer Aniston, Gabrielle Union and Liv Tyler.

Standards

Most of them are beautiful by today's standards. But, let's Dr. Jo Anne a beautician of the time's Yvonne de Carlo?

Phyllis and Thomas are outstanding only because they remind us of the great beauties of Hollywood's Golden Age. Tyler is very pretty, but she pales in comparison to the young Liz Taylor. And, Aniston is not even as pretty as or cute as Fani Allwyn.

A decade from now, most of the stars mentioned by Mr. Rosadilla here Angelinas, Bar, Gades, Edwards, Berry, Hudson, Bara, Crawford and, yes, Hepburn and Taylor, will have faded!

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